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INTRODUCTION

*F*OR THE THIRD TIME LIMES PLUS JOURNAL IS publishing the volume dedicated to the Restitution and Holocaust. It happened with our intentions that the Serbian society became vanguard for understanding some of the most complex legal and moral questions of post Holocaust Europe. They matter even more as some former socialist countries in Europe are still hiding from them. In the time of rise of populists all over Europe the questions opened at the Terezin conference 10 years ago are more important than ever. The only full embracement of the Terezin Declaration happened in one of the poorest European countries. Will Europe embrace Serbian model of restitution and acknowledge a pivotal role Serbia played in setting a comprehensive legislation we don't know, but the lessons from the past and papers that this issue is offering could be seen as a guideline for policy makers.

Haris Dajč

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**HOLOCAUST AND
RESTITUTION IN FORMER
YUGOSLAVIA: Legal and
Historical Challenges**

**PART I
HISTORICAL REVISIONISM
AND ROBBERY**

"SERBIAN MOTHER" BEFORE THE COURT OF NATION: MILAN NEDIĆ AND REHABILITATION OF COLLABORATION IN POSTSOCIALIST SERBIA

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The paper presents a synthesized overview of the theory and practice of revisionist policies in the dominant parts of Serbian society and historiography. The paper focuses on the historical role of the president of the Quisling Government in occupied Serbia, Milan Nedic. Despite the unquestionable collaboration, which was not only political and institutional but also ideological and practical, which was manifested in the adoption and implementation of the "Aryan" racist ordinances and the Holocaust, social and media rehabilitation of Milan Nedic began in the first years after the breakdown of socialism. Different aspects of the society, from the church to the theater and the media, participated in these activities. The peak of the rehabilitation of the collaboration and of Milan Nedic in post-socialist Serbia took place in the first decade of the 21st century when the top of the state invited the public to honour the personification of Serbian quislings - as patriots and martyrs. The paper also analyzes the attempt of judicial rehabilitation of Milan Nedic.

Keywords: Historical revisionism, Milan Nedic, Serbia, nationalism, World War II, Holocaust, rehabilitation, collaboration.

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ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY, which is a clearly recognizable and widely accepted methodological basis of historical science, is the understanding that in the study of the past, there is no possibility of the finite truths, unchangeable, given once and for good, and eternally valid statements and interpretations. For this reason, it can also be said that a permanent review of identified findings and discoveries is one of the common occurrences in scientific engagement with events and processes in the past. However, at the same time, this does not mean that any interpretation and (re)evaluation of historical events is equally significant or worthy, or that it should be treated equally, since the explanations of historical processes and phenomena are very often determined by factors that are outside of science and rationality, because the understanding of the past has "political and ethical consequences in the present" (Pavlović 2010, 47–78). Despite all the factors that support the relativization of the notion of historical truth and the postmodernist challenges faced by the profession, the landmarks of a historian's pursuit are undeniable. Historiography cannot be considered a scientific discipline if it does not rest on sources, which means that the historian is limited in at least two determinants – historical sources and facts arising from them. Subsequently, the scientific objectivity of historians calls for the interpretation to arise necessarily from the analytical processing of available sources, that is, relevant documentary material (Bešlin 2013, 84–85).

The politics of historical revisionism in Serbia is characterized by "ignoring the scientific contribution of post-war Yugoslav historiography, demonizing of socialism, relativizing and ignoring the contribution of the Yugoslav anti-fascist movement, relativizing and normalizing quislingism and, the most radical manifestation of the fabrication of the past is apologia for quislingism and often victimization of the prominent collaborators who lost their lives in combat with Communists, or they were trialed in the post-war tribunals of socialist Yugoslavia" (Radanović 2011, 260). What we face here is more than a lonely case or one of the trends among others, it is a systematic phenomenon, a *locus communis* of the so-called research and easy interpretation of historical events in Serbia and Yugoslavia in the past decades, primarily during the Second World War (but not only exclusively then). Historical revisionism, as defined by Todor Kuljic, represents "the processing of the past with the clear or concealed intentions of justifying national or political goals." (Kuljić 2002, 9) In other words, in the case of historical

revisionism, not only revaluation is enacted, i.e. new or modified interpretation of the past, but direct rewriting (forgery, omission, fabrication, etc.) of historical facts and giving appropriate explanations, which have an utterly utilitarian value in a particular ideological context. Historical revisionism in this sense represents a political utilitarianization of historical dealing with the past and the findings that have arisen from it. (Katz 2007) Historical revisionism, as part of a broader notion of the culture of memory, and as a completely unequivocal paradigm of the use of the past, represents a clear reflection of the political culture in a society, as it talks about its dominant political values (Kuljić 2006, 7).

Historical revisionism is just one of the aspects of a nationalist ideology - one of the supporting pillars, because the past or an image of it, provides a legitimate basis for modernity. In 1993, during the wars that were brought to the ruins of Yugoslavia with the goal to achieve the long-standing ambitions of Serbian nationalism, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts finalized and published its capital project "100 Most Famous Serbs" (*Sto najznamenitijih Srba*). In the harmony with the ideologically clearly profiled conception and the content that was supposed to show the "existence" and the centuries-long immutability of the so-called "national being", a mythologized biography of the bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church Nikolai Velimirovic, who will be proclaimed a saint later in the decade, was published. (Byford 2005; Bešlin 2013, 83). In line with their ideological orientation and political conception, the editorial board of the monograph omitted one of the key commanders of the anti-fascist Partisan movement, the Vice President of Yugoslavia and founder of Yugoslav diplomacy, Koča Popovic, under a morally and scientifically untenable excuse. On the other hand, with an even more controversial explanation, they included the fascist head of quisling administration in occupied Serbia - Milan Nedic. In the coming years, the book will have four editions in Serbian and one in the English language.

In the biography of anti-Semitic bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, as a specific hagiographic stance, untouched by rational knowledge of the past and free of critical thought, Velimirovic is glorified for the fact that, according to his own word, he prayed for Draza Mihailovic, Milan Nedic, and Dimitrije Ljotic till the end of his days. "Bishop's personal correspondence ... shows that he prayed for the three Serbian martyrs for Draza, Milan and Dimitrije, the last day of his life." (100 Most Famous Serbs, 521) The quote is the quintessence of nationalist ideology and its revisionist manifestation. It is precisely in this short and not particularly complex

quote that all the key points of the politics of historical revisionism in Serbia are crystallized, as one of the aspects of the nationalist ideology. The three representatives of the collaboration listed shoulder to shoulder, as history clustered them together because of their willing decisions during the war, and especially at its end. The cited sentence belonged to the right-wing and anti-Semitic bishop, on whose legacy the government and the opposition reached a national consensus in the wake of the epoch of wars, at the beginning of the 1990s. The positive connotation of Velimirovic and of the statement of his, can be found in a book created by the academics of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and by certain bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church; this monograph was first published in the wake of the armed conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; all the actors - those for whom the bishop praise, he who prays, and those who praise him for this prayers - merged radical anti-communism, anti-Yugoslavlism, anti-Westernism, protection of collaboration and aggressive nationalism, emanated through a war waging to the purpose of which the mentioned monograph was supposed to serve. Due to of all this, the quoted sentence reveals the continual line of nationalistic temporality, the union of the ancestors and descendants, the battle that the dead begun the living are obliged to continue - the conceptual and personal continuity of the ideological conception that has penetrated all segments of society in an attempt to make its goals eternal and without an alternative. Science has made way for mythical irrationality. Violence over history as a scientific discipline has been normated, historical revisionism has triumphed. Right-wing extremism gained its ideological platform during this period, because of the fact that the links between political legitimacy and culture of memory are multiple and powerful. (Bešlin 2013, 83–84)

Already at the very beginning of the biography, the author euphemistically states that Milan Nedic will remain "in the historical memory of his people as a prominent but also controversial figure." By relativizing the divide between fascism and anti-fascism clearly set during World War II, it is said that Nedic is controversial "as much as the division of Serbian society". The author of the biography underlines that "Nedic was against provoking Germany and therefore, against the events like the one happened on March the 27th"; This is clearly a euphemism for saying that he was for collaboration with the fascist forces. Nedić's pre-war pro-axis orientation is concealed in the biography, and when the war is in question, a completely revisionist procedure of forgery and passing over the key facts is

applied. There is no mention of the undertaken Holocaust, there is no mention of the mass crimes of the police under Nedić's command, nothing about the camps; no mention is made on Nedić's speeches and public appearances, the racist and anti-Semitic decrees. On the other hand, the "new" biography of the most famous Serbian quisling reveals that he remained "remembered as a Serbian mother" (100 Most Famous Serbs, 493). If anyone thought that Milan Nedic was responsible for the crimes, the author of the biography, Mile Bjelajac remedied any doubt. "For his convictions," it is said, "Nedic paid the highest price" (idem, 494). This way a great number of crimes, tortures and, finally, a rarely effectively implemented Holocaust, as well as the realization of Milan Nedic, derived from his racist beliefs, are marked as mere disagreement in opinions and political convictions.

In parallel with this book, the nationalist playwright, Sinisa Kovachevic wrote a theater play entitled "General Milan Nedic", which was performed 205 times in the theater known for its revisionist repertoires, "Zvezdara teatar". It has become one of the most popular plays in the Belgrade's theaters. The play was advertised on national television for years. The play which evidently victimized Milan Nedic, representing him as a righteous martyr, was running from April 12, 1992, to December 11, 2001, with many broadcasts on national television. (<https://zvezdarateatar.rs/predstavave/deneral-milan-Nedić/?lng=lat>) This made an impact on a great number of spectators so that the head of Serbian quislingism was de facto rehabilitated. After the democratic changes in Serbia in 2000, there was no shift in the abuse of history. Following the regime change in October 2000 and the extradition of Slobodan Milosevic to the International Criminal Court, the essential characteristics of the ideology of his government and the dominant values of the society have not changed. On the contrary, the overturn of the October the 5th, 2000, was wrongly interpreted as the focal point of the demolition of communism, which, further on, paved the way for condensation and reaffirmation of the defeated Serbian nationalist project and for bringing the revisionist waves and total reinterpretation of defeated quislingism to its climax. The modus operandi of the "new", post-October-5th nationalism (Milosavljević 2007) aimed at the nationalization of the anti-fascism and at compromising of the entire People's Liberation Struggle of the Partisans. It boils down to an attempt to install anti-anti-fascism as a fundamental value of a society built on anti-communism, through negation and demonization of the entire historical experience of socialist Yugoslavia. Concealing the nationalist essence of the Milosevic regime, and thus the historical defeat

of this ideology in the wars of the nineties, the new regime created an ideological basis for bringing the revisionist course to the most prominent and ultimate manifestations. In accordance with the zeitgeist, by the year 2000, a new generation of historians was formed in Serbia who attempted to give a scientific halo to the glorifying interpretation of the Chetniks of Draza Mihailovic and of the "martyr" Milan Nedic. Their "original" and creative interpretations of the past entered the first post-October-5th history textbooks¹. The most important change occurred in the treatment of Chetniks and Partisans, with the addition of the evaluation of Milan Nedics collaborationist regime. General Milan Nedic, the president of the Serbian government under the occupation, was presented as a man of "great reputation among Serbs" who saved the "biological substance of the Serbian people" because "he thought that Germany was too powerful at the moment so that, in order to prevent the further sufferings of the Serbian people, it is ought to collaborate with the occupier. Because of the terrible reprisals against civilians, he opposed all the unreasonable movements against the occupying army" (Stojanovic 2008, 159). At the same time, certain ministers in the government publicly said people should stand in awe each time Nedics name was mentioned, thus asking people to honour the one who carried out the Holocaust in occupied Serbia. During the rule of Vojislav Kostunica's government, Milan Nedics picture was hung on the wall at the headquarters of the executive government, among other prime ministers of Serbia. Nedics photo was removed only in 2008 after Kostunica's stepped down from the position of the prime minister (<https://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=864529>).

Nevertheless, the intentions towards the rehabilitation of Serbian quislingism appear even during socialist Yugoslavia, country based on the premises of the anti-fascist consensus. Certainly, long before the first revisionist achievements were made in the country, nationalist and revisionist attempts were made in the monographs printed in the West in the circles of the so-called emigrant historiography. However, this revanchist pseudo-science, not based on historical sources, had

1 In the 2000s in Serbia, the school textbooks, which are by default methodologically conservative because they hold uncontested facts and interpretations verified by science, have become a testing ground for experiments and space for presenting unconfirmed and scientifically highly controversial theses. Therefore, the appearance of such textbooks and their approval by the competent institutions have caused sharp public controversy. "Assault of the New Truths", *Vreme*, no. 622, December 5, 2002 <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=328672>

not significantly influenced the scientific interpretation of the war, until the early 1990s. Especially since the most valuable accomplishments in the West did not essentially differ from the understanding of the history of WW Two in the country.² However, with the onset of the 1991 conflict and the break-up of Yugoslavia (1992), the war politics of Serbian nationalism favoured the widespread rehabilitation of Milan Nedic in post-socialist Serbia. By the end of the 80s, the ideological basis for the war waging politics was the national homogenization. The fundamental assumption of national homogenizing intentions was the narrative of the so-called “the national reconciliation” of the protagonists of the conflict in World War II. This idea was first brought up by emigrant pro-Ljotic writer, Stanislaw Krakov,³ in his novel-apology of Milan Nedic.⁴ *National reconciliation*, founded on discredit and devastation of the supra-national and cosmopolitan heritage of socialist Yugoslavia, was proven not to be achievable without political rehabilitation of the entire quislingism, interpreted as the “national power”.⁵ Indeed, national reconciliation for the purpose of homogenization wasn’t achievable without radical revision and reinterpretation of the past. This attempt of Serbian national reconciliation based on the anti-antifascist positions (Kuljić 2005, 171–184), didn’t differ as much from the similar attempts of the nationalist ideology in Croatia in the 1990s (Bing 2008, 327–340). The national reconciliation manifested through the common burial of dead fascists and antifascists, as an attempt to abolish the ideological plurality in the society, had as the aim to legitimize fascism and to suppress the anti-fascist left. the Spanish dictator Francesco Franco (1939–1975) was actually the originator

2 First of all, we refer here to the most valuable scientific achievement in the West - the book of Joze Tomasevic, *Chetniks*, originally published in the United States. *Jozo Tomasevic, War and Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-1945. The Chetniks*, Stanford, 1975. *Yugoslav Edition - Jozo Tomasevic, Četnici u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, Zagreb, 1979.

3 Krakov was the leading fascist propagator in Belgrade in the 1930s and one of the most prominent protagonists of Serbian collaborationism during the occupation of 1941–1945. He was also the head of propaganda for the fascist organization of Dimitrije Ljotic, *Zbor. Srpski biografski rečnik*, 325–326.

4 As examples of national reconciliation Krakov lists the relations between Draza Mihailović and Milan Nedić, who, after all the “coming together and growing apart... finally realized, before the biggest commune danger, that the Serbian people could be saved only if all the Serbian national forces unite and come together. Unfortunately, this knowledge came too late in August 1944...”, Krakow 1963, 5–9.

5 Interesting enough, Krakov's formulation of “national force” used for the protagonists of Serbian Quislingism, is borrowed by revisionist historians and publicists.

of this idea, memorized through the construction of the monumental Valley of the Fallen, on the slopes of Guadarrama (Bešlin 2014, 199-233).

Nevertheless, the breadth of the scale of collaboration in Serbia should not be reduced to Milan Nedic or his associates. It's a much wider concept. The most active members of the Serbian Cultural Club, the leading ideological-nationalist organization, collaborated or fervently supported the quislings, as did the entire influential People's Defense, the summit of the largest party, the Radical Party, who remained in the country. Dozens of journalists in Belgrade agreed to edit quisling newspapers knowing that the German military commander in Serbia had announced a Press Release on May 24, 1941 saying that "the permission to work as editor would only be issued to the person who was not Jewish or Gypsy, nor married to a Jew or a Gypsy woman" (Milosavljević 2006, 138). Hence, these journalists accepted to prove their "Aryan lineage". Some of them even printed the parole "Victoria! Victory of Germany - the victory of Europe!" in the headlines of their daily papers. As the research of Olivera Milosavljevic yields, in the first year of the racist and anti-Semitic *Nasa Borba* 170 associates (professors, lawyers, journalists, students, priests etc.) gave their contribution to the paper, while 533 intellectuals signed the Appeal to the Serbian people in 1941, which was calling for the collaboration and destruction of anti-fascism (ca. 100 university professors, 40 former ministers and deputies, 35 doctors etc.) (Milosavljević 2006, 162). Given this wide circle of collaboration, it can be said that an important part of the ideological protagonists of the Serbian nationalism both ideologically and personally ended in collaboration. Therefore, the motives behind the necessity to establish a continuity with the pre-war period and to exculpate the nationalists of the stigma of collaboration and crime after the breakdown of socialism and the prevailing of nationalist ideological paradigm in Serbian society, are pretty clear. That's why it was necessary to disguise and reverse the whole history of the Second World War in Yugoslavia.

One of the most commonly used revisionist narratives, used by historians as well, is the thesis that the collaboration was made to "preserve the biological substance of the people" - the terminology used by Nedic in his public appearances. However, it was Nedic who said about Partisans, who were predominantly of Serbian stock: "These are degenerates, Communists! Crush them! Crush down this traitor's seed so that our people may live! Crush them! Kill them! You weed this dandel out of the Serbian cornfield! Your hands will become sacred, and your name

will be immortalized...embroil them, report them to the authorities and seek help. We will weed the red pest merciless, non-stop to complete extermination.” At the same time, he argued in numerous speeches that “we owe gratitude to the Great German Reich, which enabled us to live, which (...) gave us the honour of associating in the construction of the new world” (Milosavljević 2006). The attitude of Milan Nedic and his associates towards Jews and Roma people is written in the most dishonourable pages of the history of these territories. Their entire activity was public, known and accessible to every literate person in the occupied Serbia and, nowadays, to every historian: Dozens of Nedić’s regulations on the prohibition of work for Jews and Roma, banishment from university for those groups; job ads for the positions at the state institutions that all contained a compulsory clause on eligibility: “the applicant is ought to be of Serbian nationality and of purely Aryan origin, with the evidence of racial provenience (that there hasn’t been no one of Jewish or Roma stock in the wider family, their own or their spouses)”. These sources, which modern historiography mostly hushes up, bear witness to the functioning of organized Serbian fascism. Finally, Nedić’s propaganda published hundreds of articles about the “great” Adolf Hitler, but none of the shooting of civilians in Kraljevo and Kragujevac in October 1941. The assassination of students was not a reason for Milan Nedic or his Minister of Education to resign and to stop the collaboration.

From the first day of his appointment, Milan Nedic and the Serbian quisling authority were convinced in the victory of Hitler’s “new order”, because of which they uncritically copied the central Nazi idea of the protection and purity of “blood and race,” of the blood purity as the essential premise of a nation and of the necessity of extermination of all opposing ideas - Jewry, communism, masonry, and democracy. Nedic strongly advocated for the preservation of the Serbian people from “irregular mixes”, his propaganda frequently used terms from the categorical apparatus of Nazism, such are “pure race”, “white race”, “Aryanism”, etc. (Milosavljević 2006, 25) In this context, Nedics government passed a series of regulations that implemented the policies of the Nazi authorities’ regarding the deprivation of the right to the work for the Jewish and Roma population. Nedics politics of total discrimination was followed by various professional associations and business subjects. Further on, by extending the implementation of such notions to all strata of the society, the stigmatized groups were deprived of the right to elementary existence. By its decrees, Nedics government explicitly banned Jews and Roma

from working in state institutions, attending higher education, participating in the National Labour Office, while all their assets were confiscated and granted to Serbia without compensation (Milosavljević 2006, 244). Throughout all the spheres of public life, decrees passed by Nedics government required of the citizens to show written proof that they had "Serbian nationality", "Aryan origins" and no "Jewish or gypsy blood" in the family. These certificates were issued by the local authorities of the quisling administrations in different municipalities of occupied Serbia according to the so-called "Aryan paragraphs" of Nedics government. In addition, Nedics propaganda stirred up hatred against the stigmatized national and religious groups daily, repeating that the war was caused by the "Jewish plot"; it was a product of "hellish Jewish thoughts". Anti-Semitism in Nedić's press reached the summit in the conspiracy theories proving that the Jews had always sought to rule the world and that all the evils of capitalism, from the French Revolution to Marxism, were the result of "Judeo-masonic" efforts and conspiracies. This press shamelessly quoted the words of Adolf Hitler without any hesitation and found in them inspiration and the basis for their own claims. Finally, Milan Nedic and his propaganda believed that the biological survival of the Serbian people was only possible if the "death of international Jewry and Judeo-dominated Masonry" occurred, which required for their absolute "not only physical but also spiritual annihilation". If this would not happen, survival of the Serbs is threatened because, as Nedić's propaganda claimed, "the interest of international Jewry is that the Serbian people disappear" (Milosavljević 2006, 26).

The first initiative for judicial rehabilitation of Milan Nedic was submitted in 1992 by a group MPs belonging to Party of Serbian Renewal (Srpski pokret obnove), as the largest parliamentary group of the opposition to Milosevic's government. This initiative had a sort of media and political significance but did not result in court proceedings. However, in 2008, the non-parliamentary Serbian Liberal Party submitted another rehabilitation initiative, which, this time, had a judicial epilogue. By the decision of the Higher Court in Belgrade from 2014, the request for judicial rehabilitation Nedic was denied. However, on July 24, 2015, the Higher Court ordered a lower instance court to begin the rehabilitation process of Milan Nedic (<http://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/334075/Registered-Application-for-reaching-Milana-Nedića>). When the lower court rejected this initiative as unfounded, this time the procedure was initiated and the first hearing was

Rehabilitacija-Milana-Nedića-po-drugo-pred-sredom). Tendentiously, for all further hearings, the court had called in targeted witnesses who spoke in favour of rehabilitation of Milan Nedic, witnessed falsely and reinterpreted the interwar period and the WWII in Yugoslavia in a revisionist manner. The judicial procedure that was unilateral, according to the law, and during which the court could come to a decision but not to a verdict on the rehabilitation, got more complicated when the Jewish community in Belgrade demanded to take part in the trial. The Jewish community claimed their role in the trail on the grounds that Nedic had actively contributed to Holocaust on the territory of occupied Serbia against members of the Jewish community, primarily through the identification and arrest of the Jewish population and confiscation of their property.⁶ Due to the participation of the Jewish community, which made the unilateral procedure a bilateral dispute, as well as to the pressure of international institutions and political protagonists, the Higher Court in Belgrade issued a decision on July 11, 2018, rejecting the request for judicial rehabilitation of Milan Nedic as ungrounded. (<https://www.bg.vi.sud.rs/vest/1439/odbijen-zahtev-za-rehabilitaciju-milana-Nedića.php>)

Without entering into legal norms, the initial problem with the request for the rehabilitation of Milan Nedic is the fact that he was never judicially convicted. During the adoption of the Rehabilitation Act, it was emphasized that it should serve primarily to review the court proceedings, i.e. to “prosecute the court proceedings”. The basic idea of the Act was to examine whether the convicted person had a fair trial. Milan Nedic had no trial, he committed suicide in February 1946 at the beginning of the investigation process. However, judicial rehabilitation, even if it was carried out, would not really change much, because the social rehabilitation of Milan Nedic and Serbian collaboration had already taken place. Since it is clear that the motives of Nedic’s rehabilitation are not of legal nature, they could be sought in the ideological and political sphere. The key goal is to unload Nedic of historical stigma and rehabilitate the ideology he belonged to and disseminated

6 "Our Community is responsible to its members, citizens of Serbia, the institutions of the Republic and to the international Jewish community, to get involved in the rehabilitation process. Nedic and his government directly participated in the confiscation of Jewish immovable property, as well as in the identification and arrest of Jews on the territory of entire occupied Serbia," said Dr Haris Dajc, a member of the Jewish Community in Belgrade and coordinator of historical research for the Jewish property confiscated in the Holocaust. <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:630915-Jevrejska-opstina-protiv-Nedica>

during his reign. Nevertheless, historically, he was not only a quisling. Nedic was responsible for the prominent role he had in the Holocaust in Serbia during World War II. His terror apparatus, the special police, alongside with the German occupying authorities, were the pillars of extermination of the Jewish, Roma and anti-fascists population (Pisari 2014). In the first half of 1942, Serbia became the second territory in occupied Europe, after Estonia, which was formally declared "cleansed" of the Jews, and the first outside the Soviet region where the murders of the Jews were the most intense. The head of the Department for Jews in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fritz Rademacher, said that "the Jewish question is no longer an issue in Serbia". The only problem was the question of the inheritance of their property. Later, the head of the German security forces in Serbia, Emanuel Scheffer, said that Belgrade was "the only major European city to be freed from the Jews". In August 1942, Harold Turner officially informed Berlin that the "Jewish issue" in Serbia had been resolved (Bayford 2011, 42). The facts that Belgrade had been "cleansed" of Jews before Vienna or Berlin, the occupying authorities owed to the "efficiency" of Milan Nedic and his apparatus of terror, which had the task to arrest the Jewish population and confiscate their properties. However, these segments of history have been abstracted for the dominant culture of memory in Serbian society.

However, history can not be changed seven decades after the end of the Second World War. Knowledge and interpretation are being changed, but only under the influence of newly found sources, which did not happen in the case of Milan Nedic. By negation of Yugoslav anti-fascism, demonization and criminalization of Partisan winners, the proclamation the occupiers to be liberators, calling quislings patriots, rehabilitation and victimization of nationalist and fascist collaboration - the society in Serbia a posteriori puts itself on the side defeated in the Second World War. Although the failure of the judicial rehabilitation of Milan Nedic did not close the circle, the social and ideological rehabilitation of the key person of the quisling apparatus represents violation and destruction of the anti-fascist consensus and relativization of responsibility for the Holocaust in occupied Serbia. The paradigm of Milan Nedic and his rehabilitation in post-socialist Serbia represents a combination of negationism and illegitimate revisionism, where the past has been changed primarily due to particular ideological and political interests, and the entire process is supported by the state, its institutions and various

20 | political structures that have changed during the observed period. The denial of

historical responsibility of Milan Nedic and quisling criminal authorities and request for justification of the collaboration was undertaken systematically, while in the background of this process the nationalistic motives lie, as ideological models that are dominant in Serbia nearly three decades since the breakup of Yugoslavia and the entry into the era of the post-socialist transition.

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„Srpska majka” pred sudom nacije: Milan Nedić i rehabilitacija kolaboracije u postsocijalističkoj Srbiji

U radu se daje sintetizovan pregled teorije i prakse revizionističkih politika u dominantnim delovima srpskog društva i istoriografije. Rad se fokusira na istorijsku ulogu predsednika kvislinške vlade u okupiranoj Srbiji, Milana Nedića. Uprkos nesumnjivoj kolaboraciji, koja nije bila samo politička i institucionalna, već i ideološka i praktična, što se manifestovalo u donošenju i sprovođenju „arijevskih” rasističkih uredbi i sprovedenom Holokaustu – društvena i medijska rehabilitacija Milana Nedića počela je prvih godina nakon sloma socijalizma. Različiti aspekti društva, od crkve do pozorišta i medija, učestvovali su u navedenim aktivnostima. Vrhunac rehabilitacije kolaboracije i Milana Nedića u postsocijalističkoj Srbiji odigrao se u prvoj deceniji 21. veka, kada je iz vrha države pozivano da se odaje počast personifikaciji srpskog kvislinštva – kao patrioti i mučeniku. U radu se analizira i pokušaj sudske rehabilitacije Milana Nedića.

Ključne reči: Istorijski revizionizam, Milan Nedić, Srbija, nacionalizam, Drugi svetski rat, Holokaust, rehabilitacija, kolaboracija.

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WASTELANDS OF HISTORICAL REVISIONISM: REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST IN LAST YEARS OF YUGOSLAV SOCIALISM 1988–1991

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The article discusses last several years of socialist Yugoslavia, the period from 1988 to 1991, as a tipping period when started formation of one new social-political context that will also cause breakout of the country, and within which the Holocaust became liable to some new ways of explanation. In order to present different standpoints that existed in multinational Yugoslav society, the article is based on two key issues – increase of anti-Semitism and attempts to revitalize the Holocaust among Croatian political elite, while the second one was founding and activity of Društvo srpsko-jevrejskog prijateljstva (The Serbian-Jewish friendship society) as a symbol of attempts by Serbian intellectual elite to, through building of memory on the Holocaust based on the narrative of joint ordeal of Serbs and Jews, promote their image of current situation in the country.

Key words: The Serbian-Jewish friendship society, Holocaust, culture of remembering, Franjo Tudjman, Yugoslavia, Jews, anti-Semitism

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IN THE LAST YEARS OF EXISTENCE OF SOCIALIST Yugoslavia, memories of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism became instruments of fight for political power in the country. Historical remembering that in Yugoslav socialism always was politically functionalized, towards the end of 1980s became, according to opinion of participants of the Conference of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia held in 1989, closely connected with a process of democratization and transition towards multi-party system (Gordiejew 1999, 372). The strengthening of new national political options in the country brought about new interpretation of the history of Yugoslav nations that, to a large extent, was contrary to most important ideological narratives on which socialist Yugoslavia was based upon. According to the opinion of Dejan Jović, demolition of the myth of national-liberation movement had four basic elements: 1. challenged was key idea of socialist narrative that Yugoslavia offered radically different type of socialism than the one developed by Soviet Union, 2. Interpretation of the role of partisan movement shifted from the image of partisans as the only anti-Fascist movement towards understanding they were just one of the sides in a civil war, 3. As a consequence of such an interpretation of the war, many authors in Slovenia (Spomenka Hribar), Croatia (Franjo Tuđman) and Serbia (Dobrica Ćosić) proposed national reconciliation within their own nations, with a goal of erasing differences between Chetniks/Ustashe/Belogardejci and partisans and 4. Tito's politics and his personal lifestyle now started to be publicly criticized (Jović 2003, 337–338). The change of remembering culture regarding WW II inevitably brought some new views of the Holocaust that mostly depended on national and nationalist perspective of their makers.

1. TUĐMAN'S ANTI-SEMITISM AND RELATIVIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST IN CROATIA

In that new spectrum of political pluralism, the biggest differences and contrasts in understanding past, and by that also in the attitude towards the Holocaust, existed between new Serbian and Croatian nationalist narratives. On one hand, in Serbian collective consciousness increased significance was given to memory of Ustashe genocide over Serbs in so-called NDH, and concentration camp Jasenovac as that fatal point became a symbol of all Serb victims killed by Ustashe hands all over Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During 1980s in Serbian intellectual

elite developed a new interpretation of history of Yugoslav nations that promoted new theses on Chetnik movement as the first anti-Fascist movement in Europe and Serbs being a nation that from both Yugoslavias received nothing although for it they gave more lives than others in both world wars. Croatian side tried to answer such claims first in “orthodox” socialist manner, so party ideologists like Josip Vrhovec and Stipe Suvar organized a series of consultations with leading Croatian intellectuals where they revised topics like Cominform, historiography in Croatia and Yugoslavia and demystification of the past (Jovic 2003, 342)

Anyway, its own interpretations also offered Croatian right wing, and those were interpretations that dominantly meant relativization of the Holocaust and Ustashe crimes, and the best example for that was the book of Croat historian, former general of Yugoslav National Army and future president of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tudjman, published under the title *Bespuća povjesne zbiljnosti* (Wastelands of historical reality) in Zagreb in 1989. As far as relations towards the Holocaust were concerned, Tudjman’s book had two obvious goals: first one, negation and minimization of crimes committed in Jasenovac followed by total relativization, not only of Ustashe crimes but also of Nazi politics altogether, and second one, strengthening of usual anti-Semitic stereotypes. Similar to German revisionists like Ernst Nolte, Tudjman also tried to explain the Holocaust and Ustashe genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in WW II as one, in no way special or authentic, variant of crimes that repeated myriad of times in human history. That is why in his book Tudjman devoted one whole chapter to issues of genocide and crimes in history, and there he cited various historical examples starting from episodes from the Bible, to crimes of Roman army over Parthians, Gauls, Illyrians, Celts, Germanic peoples, to crusades against Muslims, Huguenots, Bogomils, Albigensians and Hussites, all the way to wars in 19th and first half of 20th century, with intention to present historical continuity that would relativize proportions of Ustashe genocide (Tudjman 1989, 128–147). By ignoring totally different general context of different crimes in human history, Tudjman put them in same historical plane and therefore entered the zone of revisionism and justifying of Nazism. According to Dominick LaCapra, major problem in comparing the Holocaust with other crimes is contained in the fact that such type of comparisons, in most cases, leads first towards equalizing, and then towards total negation of the Holocaust as unique event, and that was, as emphasized LaCapra, already the case with certain authors such as Arno Mayer (La Capra 1994; Mayer 1988). In that way in times when the

whole world understood authentic nature of the Holocaust, Tudjman joined those who attempted to totally negate one of the biggest 20th century crimes. As far as position towards the Holocaust is concerned, the most disputable part of the book is the one in which Tudjman verbatim and uncritically cited testimony of Vojislav Prnjatovic, Serb from Sarajevo and Jasenovac prisoner who, after release from the camp in March 1942, gave statement to Commissariat for refugees of Nedić's government on situation in Jasenovac camp, and in which he responsibility for crimes partly directed towards Jewish inmates. Prnjatovic claimed that in the camp existed prisoners' administration, independent of Ustashe, that was mostly made of Jews since "they arrived earlier and managed to grab all important places in the prisoners' hierarchy" (Tudjman 1989, 317–318). Also, repeated were Prnjatovic's claims that "Ustashe had more faith in Jews", that Jews "incessantly and skilfully made intrigues against Serbs", that "Serbs, besides being victims of Ustashe were also victims of Jews", and that "Jew remains a Jew, even in Jasenovac camp" (Tudjman 1989, 318). Tudjman commented that such Prnjatovic's qualification "gives impression of exaggeration, or one can say anti-Semitic mood", but despite that later on, referring to some more sources like testimony of Branko Popovic and Croatian communist Ante Ciliga, he anyway concluded that "some of Jewish prisoner functionaries were armed, so they also took part in killing", and also, "they held in their hands quite a bit part of *choosing*, i.e. selecting inmates for execution, and even to some extent performed executions themselves" (Tudjman 1989, 318). Referring to testimony of Ciliga, Tudjman also incriminated Jews for participation in execution of Roma prisoners (Tudjman 1989, 319). Besides, he challenged a total number of six million Jews that perished in the Holocaust, expressing his belief that real number should be decreased to most probably one million (Tudjman 1989, 156–158).

Politics based on such apprehensions had their practical consequences. In August 1991 in the building of Jewish community in Zagreb reverberated the explosion caused by planted explosive device (Радивојша 1991), a year before, in 1990, in old Jewish cemetery on Marjan in Split were broken several artistically and historically valuable tombstones,¹ and increase of anti-Semitism was experienced first-hand by many individuals, such as Croat actress of Jewish origin Mira Furlan who, together with her Serbian husband, was forced to leave Croatia in

26 | 1 „Još iz Jugoslavije.” *Jevrejski pregled* 1–2, 1990, 26.

1991 (Gordiejew 1999, 351, 403–406). Because of his political pragmatism Tudjman later, in 1990s, distanced himself from his anti-Semitic qualifications and publicly excused himself for challenging number of Jews perished in the Holocaust, so in a letter sent to Kent Schiner, a president of American Jews organization B'nai B'rith, he described some of paragraphs of his own book as “offending”.² Tudjman's book was not the only instance where Croats attributed Ustashe crimes over Serbs to Jews. In Split weekly *Slobodni tjednik*, issue 3 of March 14, 1990, published an interview with Ivo Omrchanin who in the times of so-called NDH was chargé d'affaires of Croat embassy in Berlin, where he presented claims that for carnage of Serbs in the Orthodox church in Glina guilty were Jews, same as for bloodbath in Kerestinec, while for crimes in Jasenovac he also blamed Jews who “made there Hollywood, so they lived comfortably in the camp”.³

Despite the fact that for relativization of the Holocaust towards the end of 1980s and in early 1990s most interested was Croatian political elite, Serbian side also uncritically used testimony of Vojislav Prnjatovic. In his book *Velikomučenički Jasenovac* (Great martyrs of Jasenovac), published for the first time in 1990, future Episcopo of Banat, and later on of Zahumlje-Herzegovina, Atanasije Jevtic presented that testimony without any critical explanation, including the part where was cited that Jews Dijamantstajn, Viner, Feldbauer and Begovic were at the top of prisoner's hierarchy that was “fully trusted by Ustashe” (Jevtic 2016, 48–49). To repeated publishing of that testimony reacted Lavoslav Kadelburg, president of the Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia (SJO), who in a newspaper article observed that despite noble intention of the author, something he did not challenge, and obvious need to repeatedly refresh memory of Fascist crimes, it is still unacceptable to uncritically repeat anti-Semitic clichés on negative Jewish nature (L.K. 1990). As especially problematic Kadelburg marked parts where Prnjatovic said: “Jew remains a Jew, even in Jasenovac camp. In the camp they stuck to their shortcomings, only now those were more visible. Selfishness, lack of solidarity, avarice, insidiousness, cunning and denouncing are they major characteristics,” or “Since Ustashe had more confidence in Jews, intrigues they spread were successful. So Serbs, besides being victims of Ustashe, were also victims of Jews” (Jevtic 2016, 106).

2 „Покушај приближавања.” *Вечерње Новостии*, March 27, 1994.

3 „Саопштење.” *Jevrejski pregled* 1-2, 1990, 26–27.

2. THE SERBIAN-JEWISH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY AND MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST

In remembering WW II numerous were episodes, from Jasenovac to Novi Sad raid, in which Serbs and Jews shared the role of victim, so in late 1980s joint ordeals became basis for building new forms of cooperation. As a consequence of this convergence on the social scene appeared one more, new, subject for remembering the Holocaust – the Serbian-Jewish friendship society. The Society was founded on May 28, 1988 in Belgrade, and as said on founding assembly, main goal of the Society was to “starting from existing historical connections... strengthens and develops friendship and supports and enriches cultural cooperation between Serbian and Jewish people”.⁴ In article 7 of the statute of the Society it was clearly described what is the basis for cooperation: “traditional friendship”, “several centuries of joint life of Serbian Jews and Serbs”, “similarity of historical destiny, especially in a tragic genocide”, and “awareness of need for permanent fighting racial, national, religious and political exclusiveness and hatred” (Simić 1989). It was obvious, therefore, that main pillar of activities of that society were history and remembering of the past.

Among founders and those who gave their support from the beginning were many prominent names from spheres of art, science, journalism, including both Serbs and Jews, like Marko Anaf, Andrija Gams, Andreja Preger, Enriko Josif, Dobrica Cosic, Ljubomir Simovic, Matija Beckovic, Ljubomir Tadic, Predrag Palavestra, Nikola Milosevic, Borislav Pekic, Dragoslav Mihajlovic, Vuk Draskovic, David Albahari, Filip David, Egon Savin, Brana Crnchevic and many others. Soon afterwards were founded local committees throughout Serbia, for instance in Valjevo, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Nis, Lazarevac, Sabac, Smederevo, and in December 1990 founded was a committee in Los Angeles, California, with intention to get closer with American Jewry, while major goals of that branch of the Society was “to enter data on genocide over Serbian people into Jewish museums of the Holocaust that are founded all over America”, and to gather money for printing a book that would provide scientific data on “the Holocaust of Serbs and Jews in the territory of Yugoslavia” (Mancic 1990).

Founding of the Society came within context of general social events in Yugoslavia that were, among other, marked by revision of former policy towards

28 | 4 „Друштво српско-јеврејског пријатељства.” *НИН*, June 5, 1988.

Israel and increasingly frequent invitations for re-establishing diplomatic relations between two countries that Yugoslav side severed back in 1967 because of Six-Day War. Opening towards Israel started by establishing relations between Socialist union of working people of Yugoslavia and those persons from Israel that advocated peace and negotiations with Palestinians, among which one of the most prominent was Mattityahu Peled, a member of Knesset and former general and military commander of Jerusalem, who visited Belgrade on several occasions in that period (Petkovic 1988). Warming between two countries had visible effects in Yugoslav society: established were regular flights to Tel Aviv, significantly increased a number of Yugoslav tourists visiting Israel, in domestic press and in television more and more appeared interviews with prominent figures of Israeli political scene and, of course, started was initiative for founding Serbian-Jewish friendship society. Anyway, besides these indications that suggested improvement of Israeli-Yugoslav relations, official policy of Yugoslav administration did not depart from former position that there is still no basis for revising relations with Israel, so Committee for foreign affairs of SFRY assembly announced that, as long as Israel does not change its policy towards its Arab neighbours Yugoslavia sees no reason to change its position (Petkovic 1988). In accordance with that, still official position of the state, many officials in the administration structure, it seems, were not in favour of founding an organization that would advocate bringing together Serbs and Jews and opening towards Israel, so both Municipal and Republic office for internal affairs denied permit for registering Serbian-Jewish friendship society, but still in December 1988 the Supreme Court brought verdict that annulled all previous decisions of those offices and permitted registration of mentioned association, full seven months after it was actually founded (A.Ђ. 1988).

One of the best examples showing how Society linked Serbian moment with Jewish history, i.e. the Holocaust, was one of its first announcements, addressed to Socialist union of working people of Slovenia with a protest over use of Jewish national symbol, Star of David in a meeting held in Cankarjev Dom in Ljubljana on February 27, 1989, where position of Albanians in Kosovo was compared with position of Jews in 1941. Among other things, the announcement said this: “We do not impute anti-Semitism to Albanian people, but if there is some comparison to ordeal of Jewish nation, that can refer only to Serbs, Montenegrins and progressive Albanians who are in so many ways in the same position as were Jews in Hitler

times”⁵, and such a position of Society was supported by the Federation of Jewish communities of Yugoslavia. Therefore, deterioration of interethnic relations, especially in Croatia and Kosovo, was often interpreted through making historical comparisons with turbulent times of WW II and victimization of one of the sides in a conflict, and in case of Serbian-Jewish friendship society that side was Serbian.

That was the reason why then Croat part of Yugoslav public considered the activity of the Society mostly negative, and with war approaching, animosity reached its peak, just as did tensions in Serbian-Croat relations. Extremely huge reactions in Croatian public caused one event from August of 1991, when one of the commandants of Serbian paramilitary formations in Croatia, Dragan Vasiljkovic better known as captain Dragan, appeared in one press conference in Kragujevac with prominent Star of David around neck, so Croatian press described that as “another attempt of Serbian propaganda that is trying to sneak into Croatia a mistrust towards Jews”, and actions of captain Dragan, due to his friendship with Klara Mandić, were right away linked with very Serbian-Jewish friendship society that Croatian media marked as “notorious” (De Prato 1991). Also, Croatian media published information that captain Dragan is actually a Jew whose real name is Daniel Stern, and that during onset of conflict Serbian-Jewish friendship society organized dispatch of food, medicines and weapons to Knin.⁶ Because of this and similar incidents, the activity of Serbian-Jewish friendship society was and remained limited mostly to territory of SR Serbia.

In addition to active social action in the context of contemporary events on the eve of the breakup of the state, remembering the Holocaust was another important task of the association. This could be clearly seen at the first assembly held on March 5, 1989, at the premises of the Association of Serbian Writers in Francuska Street No. 7 in Belgrade, before which the participants of the Assembly laid wreaths on the monuments to the victims of the Holocaust and Jews who had been killed in the Balkan and World War I, at the Sephardic cemetery (Vojnović 1989). From the very beginning, the Assembly of the Association launched initiatives to remind victims of war and war crimes. Some of the first ideas were to raise a monument to Serbian, Jewish and Roma victims of the Ustasha genocide, proclaiming the day of the dead, as a state and church holiday for all victims of Ustasha

5 „Zloupotreba simbola.” *Večernje novine*, Sarajevo, March 1, 1989.

30 | 6 „Tajna ljubav srpskog komandosa.” *Globus*, August 16, 1991.

crimes, and to publish a book with victims' data, as the number of victims would no longer be arbitrarily interpreted.⁷ Nevertheless, the most important action of the association regarding the preservation of memories of the Holocaust and one of their most important initiatives was collecting of funds for the construction of *Menora u plamenu* (*Menor in flames*) monument on Dorcol's coast of Belgrade, which would be dedicated to all Belgrade Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

One of the most significant results of this effort and one of the most impressive examples of Yugoslav memorials dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust is the monument *Menora u plamenu* by Nandor Glid, discovered in 1990 in the Danube Quay in Belgrade. A monument to Jewish fighters and victims of fascism, which was erected in 1952 at the Belgrade Sephardic cemetery, was dedicated to Jewish victims from all over Serbia, and there was also another monument at the Jewish cemetery in Zemun, built in memory of 573 members of the Zemun Jewish municipality, killed in the Second World War. However, over the years, the question was asked about raising a new monument dedicated exclusively to the suffering Jews of Belgrade, as a memorial to the largest pre-war Jewish community in Yugoslavia and most likely to be placed in the part of the city where Jews once had lived. Dorcol, the old part of Belgrade, bounded by the Kalemegdan Park on one side and Skadarska Street on the other, which from today's Student Park, down the slope descends towards the Danube, was part of Belgrade, where about 80% of the Jewish population lived in Belgrade until the Second World War. Ever since the time when Belgrade was under the Ottoman rule, the Jewish mahals were formed in the lower Dorcol area, between today's Cara Dusana Street and the Danube River, so that from the end of the 19th century the Jews began inhabiting the area of the upper Dorcol, closer to the city. There were also the most important Jewish institutions in Belgrade: the Sephardic Synagogue Bet Izrael in Cara Urosa Street, the building of the Sephardic municipality of Belgrade in Kralja Petra Street, the Oneg Shabat Society building in Jewish Street, the Old Synagogue (*El kal vjež*) in lower Dorcol and the Jewish female society building, which was used as a Jewish hospital during the war and today is the Faculty of Defectology. It made Dorcol the center of Jewish life in the town. After war, the number of Jews was drastically reduced, and under the influence of new socialist urbanization, old Dorcol began to taking a new shape, which was less of what resembled the Jewish history of this

7 Arhiv Jevrejskog istorijskog muzeja (AJIM), Hemeroteka, S. Jelić, *Gest dostojanstva*

part of the city, so there was a need to preserve the memory of Belgraders which were no longer alive.

The first ideas for monumentalising Belgrade's Jews, victims of the Holocaust, appeared within the Jewish community in the second half of the 1970s, induced by a new momentum of urbanization that threatened to erase the latest traces of Jewish heritage at Dorcol. The Jewish Historical Museum launched an initiative, within the framework of the new urban reconstruction of Dorcol, of taking care and marking of Jewish cultural and historical monuments. In 1977 representatives of the Museum and the Jewish heritage of Belgrade together with the leaders of the Belgrade municipality *Stari grad*, The Directorate for Building and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Belgrade agreed to place plates in the places of worn-out buildings planned for demolition, in which the deserving individuals lived. It meant excluding from demolition the former buildings of the Jewish Female Society and The *Oneg Šabat* Society, but also that the names of Braća Baruh Street and Jevrejska Street remain and to build a monument for Jews perished in war in the part of Solunska Street, between Braca Baruh Street and Cara Urosa Street, which was to be transformed into a pedestrian zone according to the new urban plan (Kapon 1977, 22–23). As this urban plan has never been realized until the end, the same thing happened to the planned monument in Solunska Street. Individuals also pointed out the need to raise a monument at Dorcol in the late 70's. About the same time as the Jewish Historical Museum started an initiative for this, Rafailo Blam, a famous composer, conductor, one of the first Belgrade jazz musicians and the then vice president of the Jewish municipality of Belgrade, wrote a short text about Dorcol of his youth in which he concluded: "I often think about that somewhere at Dorcol a monument should be raised, as a memorial to the Jews, where the stone text would have been carved: *Until 1941, there were peaceful citizens of Belgrade-Jews who were killed innocent by infernal fascism*. The initiative for such a monument should come from us, and that would be our debt to Belgrade's Dorcol and our killed brothers." (Blam 1976/1977) In July 1977, he sent a public invitation through "Među nama" column in the *Politika* newspaper, that all of the Belgrade Jews victims should have a monument in any location at Dorcol (Blam 1977). One of the first to publicly support the proposal of Rafailo Blam was the painter Zuko Dzumhur, also growing up in this part of the city, who pointed out that such a monument should be "a warning that pogrom, hatred and racism must never be again." (Dzumhur 1977) However, despite the

great response and the extraordinary support by the citizens, it was necessary more than a decade to have accomplished it.

At the end of 1980s, the initiative was re-launched, just as Rafailo Blam had wanted - by the Belgrade Jewish municipality and as a debt to the dead Jews and the old Belgrade Dorcol. The initiative was soon adopted also outside of the Jewish community, supported by the Association of Serbian-Jewish Friendship, as well as a larger group of Serbian intellectuals, among others Vladimir Dedijer, Radovan Samardzic, Matija Beckovic, Ljubomir Tadic and Mira Trailovic, who spoke to the president of the City assembly at the time, Aleksandar Bakochevic, asking for a commission for raising a monument to be formed and to have it done exclusively at Dorcol.⁸ It was soon supported by Purisa Djordjevic, Gorica Mojovic, Stojan Celic, Enriko Josif, Desanka Maksimovic, Ljubomir Simovic, Milic od Machve, Mira Stupica, Jovan Cirilov and many others. It was concluded that the money should also be collected by ordinary citizens through a wide social action that would include auctions of paintings by Mica Popovic, Stojan Chelic and Milic Stankovic, as well as theater performances organized by Ljubomir Tadic and Mira Stupica (Almuli 1989). Belgrade Theater "Dusko Radovic" donated all the income from a single performance of the popular play *Šovinistička farsa*, directed by Egon Savin according to the text of Radoslav Pavlovic, and the similar action was announced by the "Yugoslav Drama Theater" with the play *Dibuk* and "Atelje 212" with the play *Čudo u Šarganu*, according to the text of Ljubomir Simovic.⁹ Soon, by the decision of the Belgrade City Assembly, a Committee for the Elevation of Monuments was formed¹⁰, headed by academician Radovan Samardzic.¹¹ Therefore, this was an example of action of memorialization initiated by the Jewish community and the Society of Serbian-Jewish friendship, but financially and

8 „Заслужили су споменик.” *Политика*, April 28, 1989.

9 „Шовинистичка фарса за споменик јеврејским жртвама.” *Политика*, January 12, 1990.

10 In committee composition, besides the president Radovan Samaržić, also entered: Ljubomir Tadić, Veljko Guberin, Ljubiša Ristović, Jaša Almuni, Nisim Konfino, Miša David, Aleksandar Demajo, Leposava Milošević, Aleksandar Zarin, Dragan Dragojlović, Boško Novaković, Aleksandra Banović, Borivoje Cvejić, Branka Ješić, Milosav Bojić, Ratko Marić, Slobodan Vučković, Branislav Ivković, Željko Eror, Lucija Spirović Jovanović, Miodrag Prodanović, Vujo Vukmirica, Viktor Pris.

11 „Апел за подизање споменика јеврејским жртвама геночида.” *Јеврејски преглед* 1–2, јануар-фебруар 1990, 4; „Апел одбора за подизање споменика јеврејским жртвама геноцида.” *Борба*, January 17, 1990.

organically implemented by the state, and, as can be seen from the composition of the commemorative committee, the extremely high esteem of attitudes and opinions of Jewish representatives.

An interesting detail worth paying attention to is that the most commonly used name of the monument was "The Monument to Jewish Victims of Nazi Genocide", while in its decision to build the monument it was called "The Monument to the Jewish Victims of the German Genocide",¹² while the term Holocaust was not used at all when it came to the construction of this memorial, which suggests that even in 1990, before the very beginning of the break-up of the state, this notion was not in wider use of the Yugoslav public. Unlike the first decades of the existence of socialist Yugoslavia when, in the inscriptions on monuments to the victims, literature, works of art, etc., mainly used expressions such as fascist, terror against Jews or the crimes of the occupiers of the Jews, it was noticeable that in the late 80s and early 90s this concept evolved in a more pronounced expression of Nazi or German genocide against the Jews, which, more accurately, pointed to the nature of the crimes committed by the Germans and their associates over the Jewish people, but also the rule the distinction between the concepts of fascism and Nazism. Nevertheless, the term Holocaust would become more frequent in the domestic public, press, and scientific works only after the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Already at the first session of the committee, the decision was made that the construction of the monument should be made by Nandor Glid, who at that time had a great reputation and an extremely important work of monuments and sculptures dedicated to Holocaust victims, including monuments in the Dachau and Mauthausen camps. Glid proposed an interesting solution: a monument called the *Dorcol Menor* or *Menor in Flames*, 5.5 feet tall with a stand, should be a stylized Jewish seven-pointed candlestick, Menorah, captured by a flame that could simultaneously be interpreted as an open hand made of interwoven human bodies who want, like Phoenix, to rise from the flames and escape from death. (Subotić 2012, 142) The Members of the Expert Commission of the Committee for Monument Rising visited Nandor Glid in his studio on 02. 04. 1990. At that time, they noted that this had been the most successful Glid's solution for a monument of

12 Istorijiski arhiv Beograda (IAB), Zbirka Boška Novakovića (1595), K-4, *Odluka o podizanju spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama nemačkog genocida*.

the kind so far.¹³ According to his own admission, Glid was particularly fond of this project, first of all because he managed to reconcile an art form with a theme of starvation and dramatic lyricism through it, but also because for Glid, who himself was a Holocaust victim, this monument was a symbolic tomb for his parents, he said: “I can not imagine that my father and mother whom I can not find the grave lie beside the Ustashas and the SS ... To me it is also a crime. This call to oblivion is not human, it is cynical, it is unsustainable”. (Grubach 1990) By its symbolism and used motifs such as phoenix, intertwined dying human bodies and flames, the monument represented a kind of sublimation of the previous Glid’s works. Later, another version of the sculpture, Menorah 2, was made, which was set up in Thessaloniki in 1997, in memory of the local Jewish community, one of the largest in Europe, which had disappeared completely in the Holocaust.

The monument was set on the Dorcol coast of the Danube at the very end of the Jevrejska Street and it was, according to the urban plan, supposed to be a central part of a wider historical, cultural and economic area, which has never been realized completely.¹⁴ It was one of the most important monuments of the kind built up to date in the territory of Serbia and Yugoslavia. It was also an example of the joint involvement of the state and the Jewish community in preserving memories of the Holocaust, which at the same time recognize the Jews as victims of a special genocidal policy, The third Reich, which was not a frequent example in the memorial architecture of socialist Yugoslavia. On October 21, 1990, the monument was revealed by the mayor of Belgrade, Milorad Unkovic. The speech was also given by the speaker of the Israeli parliament, Dov Shilansky, which at the time was an extremely important act, since the diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Israel had been interrupted in 1967 and had not been renovated yet. On that occasion, he also expressed the hope for the diplomatic relations of the two countries soon to be re-established.

Beside him, the president of the Jewish municipality of Belgrade, Yasha Almul, also spoke to the audience, and told for the ceremony that for surviving Jews, this is not one common disclosure of the monument, but “the first dignified burial of dead Jews whose bodies were thrown into a nameless tomb”. He added that by

13 IAB, 1595- K-4, *Informacija o idejnom rešenju spomenika jevrejskim žrtvama nacističkog genocida u Beogradu*.

14 „Апел одбора за подизање споменика јеврејским жртвама геноцида.” *Борба*, January 17, 1990.

this act the present crowd enrolled victims in “our hearts instead of rake, and we put them under the auspices of this monument”. Finally the prayer for the dead was held by Rabbi Cadik Danon.¹⁵ How much the raising of the monument actually had broad social support was testified by the number and variety of organizations attending the ceremonies and laying wreaths on the monument, among which were the Delegations of the Society for Maintaining the Traditions of Serbian Liberation Wars until 1918, the Serbian Democratic Party from Knin, The Serbian Renewal Movement, the Union of Jewish Municipalities of Yugoslavia and even the fans of the Red Star.¹⁶ After *Menora u plamenu* (The Menora in Flame) was revealed, only one memorial was given to the victims of the Holocaust exactly before the break-up of the state began. At the end of 1991 in Vrbas, at the place of the destroyed synagogue, in memory of the Jewish victims of fascism from this city, a monument was risen, which has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, and which is also the last monument to the victims of the Holocaust raised in socialist Yugoslavia. Raising the memorial *Menora u plamenu* was the most significant achievement of the members of the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society, whose activity in the coming period would be stagnating and declining.

3. CONCLUSION

With the appearance of a multiparty in Yugoslavia and the beginning of the process of rejecting the former official way of interpreting the past of the Yugoslavs, media space opened up for the advent of various new views on the Holocaust and the Second World War. In the Croatian publicist writings began to appear articles that spoke about the Ustashe movement in a positive way, and the book *Bespuća povjesne zbiljnosti* (Helpless of the Historical Reality), published in 1989 by Croatian future president Franjo Tuđman, sought to relativise the former way of perception of the infamous Ustasha Jasenovac camp, and the total number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was minimized to one million. These attitudes also had practical negative manifestations that rose in the rise of anti-Semitism as well as increasingly frequent anti-Jewish outbursts, such as the desecration of the Jewish

15 „Откривен споменик београдским Јеврејима.” *Побјега*, Титоград, October 22, 1990.

36 16 „Заборав је издаја.” *Борба*, October 22, 1990.

cemetery at Marjan in Split in 1990 and a bomb attack on the premises of the Jewish municipality of Zagreb a year later.

On the other hand, the Serbian intellectual elite endeavoured to promote its own political goals in the time of confrontation with the Croats about the narrative of the common suffering in the past and the historical connection between the Serbian and the Jewish people. The most obvious expression of such an endeavour was the establishment of the Society of Serbian-Jewish Friendship, which developed a wide range of activities, from attempts to re-establish contacts and official diplomatic relations with Israel by circumventing the federal level of government, but also to intensify the memory of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Serbs in the so called NDH. One of the most important actions of that society was the raising *Menora u plamenu* in 1990 in Belgrade, dedicated to the victims of Belgrade Jews, which, by its form but also symbolic, was a hint that, before the beginning of the break up of the state in Yugoslav society, started to accept the modern understanding of the Holocaust as an authentic phenomenon in the history of the 20th century.

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Bespuća povjesnog revizionizma: sećanje na Holokaust u poslednjim godinama jugoslovenskog socijalizma 1988–1991.

Članak obrađuje period poslednjih nekoliko godina socijalističke Jugoslavije od 1988. do 1991, kao prelomnog perioda kada je počeo da se formira jedan novi društveno-politički kontekst, koji će dovesti i do raspada zemlje, u okviru koga je i Holokaust postao podložan novim načinima tumačenja. Kako bismo predstavili različite vizure koje su postojale u multinacionalnom jugoslovenskom društvu, članak se bazira na dva osnovna pitanja – narastajući antisemitizam i pokušaji relativizacije Holokausta među hrvatskom političkom elitom i drugo osnivanje i aktivnost Društva srpsko-jevrejskog prijateljstva, kao simbola nastojanja srpske intelektualne elite da gradeći sećanje na Holokaust na bazi narativa o zajedničkom stradanju Srba i Jevreja, promovišu svoju sliku o trenutnom stanju u državi.

Ključne reči: Društvo srpsko-jevrejskog prijateljstva, Holokaust, kultura sećanja, Franjo Tuđman, Jugoslavija, Jevreji, antisemitizam

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COLLABORATION OF THE SPECIAL POLICE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "FINAL SOLUTION" IN OCCUPIED SERBIA (1941–1944)

Original Scientific Article

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The article describes the activity of the Special police in resolving the Jewish question in occupied Serbia, primarily in assisting the Gestapo and cooperating with other quisling and autochthonous institutions. During 1941 and 1942, when the largest part of the Jewish population was recorded, imprisoned and liquidated, and during the next two years of occupation, the Special police continuously operated according to the Gestapo orders and thus entered into a collaboration, carrying out ancillary affairs, and therefore assisting in the preparation of the liquidation of the Jewish people. The purpose of the article is to present, according to literature and research of archival sources, the collaboration of the Special police in the affairs of resolving the Jewish question. Using the thematic method of presenting data, the author sought to show in general, but also in individual cases, the activities of the Special police in cooperation with occupation and quisling institutions, in the cases of Jews in occupied Serbia, but also to put it in the context of collaborationist police in Europe.

Key words: Jewish question, Occupied Serbia, Special police, Collaboration.

THE IDEA OF ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL-Socialist state, along with its expansion in Europe, implied the implementation of Nazi leadership plans, which included two tasks. The first was to maintain control over racially undesirable through the police state and eliminate the threats posed by Jews, Roma, Poles, Ukrainians and other “racially undesirable peoples”, while another, more important task, was to implement plans for the “Living space of the German people” (*Lebensraum*), which was largely arranged by the displacement of “lower” nations, and the planned settlement of 10 million ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutscher*). In this organization of “New Europe”, as one of the key issues, a “Jewish question” appeared, which Hitler also wanted to solve in a violent way. (Mazover 2011, 178–179) At the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, the work of the SS and the Gestapo became fully connected with the Jewish question. In the period before that, the main goal of the Nazi leadership was not to exterminate the Jewish people, but to expel it from the “Living space of the German people”. Accordingly, the famous “Madagascar Plan”, published by Adolf Eichmann, also appeared, which predicted that 4 million European Jews should be evacuated and moved to Madagascar, an island isolated in the Indian Ocean, where at that time, in the area of 364,227 km², 4,470,000 natives lived. During 1940, Hitler spoke of this with Mussolini, but a year after that, this plan was completely abandoned, and only one destiny was decided for the Jewish people— annihilation. Namely, at the time of preparation for the attack on the USSR, Hitler ordered the *Einsatzgruppen* to follow the army and, after the conquest of the territory by *Wehrmacht*, resort to the elimination of communist leaders and Russian Jews. This marked the beginning of the implementation of the policy of destroying Jews throughout Europe, and in the Nuremberg trials it was established that on July 31st 1941, Göring sent the order to Reinhard Heydrich in which he said, “I give you free hands as far as the final solution is concerned.” With this a new moral code came into force, and the “myth of blood” became the supreme command. (Brissaud and Mabire 1977, 123–128, 128–129).

Accordingly, a complex organization of various occupational systems was created throughout Europe, and the need to activate the largest part of the human potential of the Third Reich on the Eastern Front imposed the creation of local collaborative formations. Namely, there was a “*Service d’Ordre légionnaire*” (SOL)

42 | in Vichy of France for the purpose of fighting “democracy, degolitic dissidents

and Jewish plague” which was later renamed “Milice”. It had also participated in the deportation of the Jews and fighting on the Eastern front, and it was known for its exceptional cruelty.¹ In the Reich Commissariat of Ukraine, there was the police called *Schutzmannschaft*² which was strongly anti-Jewish, actively participating in the pogrom against the Jewish population during the occupation, executing several massacres. (Lawer 2005, 3–20) To which extent this police was active in resolving the Jewish question is well illustrated by the example of the Babi Yar massacre, when they, alongside Einsatzkommando, executed 34,000 Jews in just two days, on 29th and 30th September 1941. (Browning 2011, 159) In the General Government of Poland, the Blue police, named after its dark blue uniforms, was primarily responsible for maintaining “law and order”, execution of German orders, suppression of the “black market”, traffic control, but it also took part in the Holocaust. As the main focus of the Blue police was Warsaw, its members most often performed ancillary affairs, such as the escort of the Jews in and out of the Warsaw ghetto, they conducted patrols on the outside, but also participated in the pogrom in 1942. (Fridrich 2005, 722–724) A very important example are the Baltic countries – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which, along with a part of Belarus, were included in the Reich Commissariat Ostland in the status of the general commissariat. In this area, the public executions of the Jewish population were conducted under the leadership of the Einsatzgruppen, the Waffen SS brigades and Wehrmacht, but also with the significant participation of autochthonous collaborationist units. In these three Baltic states autochthonous police formations were formed at the beginning of the occupation; in the literature they were most often called the Hilfspolizei. They took an active part in the execution of the final solution in this region with significant Jewish community, as pre-war Lithuania had about 209,000 Jews, Latvia had about 95,000, while Estonia had about 4,000. Due to the activities of German, but also autochthonous institutions, the vast majority of this population did not survive the war. A testimony to their effectiveness may be the fact that autochthonous persons formed special units for killing of Jews and Roma; so in Lithuania there was a “žydžaudys” (*Jew shooters*) detachment, while in Latvia the Sonderkommando Arajs was formed, named after its commander; it

1 More in: (Kalvokorezi 1987, 252–253); Olivesi Dominique, 2001. “La presentation du serment du service d'ordre légionnaire (S.O.L) aux arènes de Cimiez le 22 février 1942” <https://cdlm.revues.org/60> (pristupljeno: 15.11.2018.)

2 More in: (Dean 2000)

has very quickly “distinguished” itself with massive and independent liquidation of the Jews, such as the infamous “Rumbula massacre”. (Gaunt 2011, 210–214) These and similar police formations throughout Europe³ were directly subordinated to the Gestapo and served as an auxiliary organ in executing actions of the German police. They were created according to a similar principle, most often immediately after the establishment of the German authorities. At the very beginning, they were most often structured in the similar form to the Gestapo and with structural changes in accordance with the needs and orders of the Gestapo. Nevertheless, each of these police forces acted in accordance with the specific need in the area for which it was in charge, and therefore there were differences in the origins, the principles of work and tasks that were in the domain of their work, and in that light the Special police, which was created in occupied Serbia, should be observed.

1. AUTOCHTHONOUS POLICE FORMATION IN OCCUPIED SERBIA - SPECIAL POLICE

After the coup on March 27th, 1941, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia soon faced a war against a far superior and technically more equipped opponent. The ratio of forces was 870,000 well-armed soldiers, equipped with state-of-the-art armored and mechanized units, as well as modern and numerous aviation, against 600,000 poorly armed soldiers of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In such a constellation of forces, the April War was quickly finished, and Yugoslav independence has ended. (Petranović 1992, 109–110) Already before the end of military operations, the organization of effective government began, which was carried out by the formation of a military administration and a number of occupying institutions of middle and upper ranks. These positions are largely filled up with entire occupying institutions and persons transferred from France, where they have already gained experience in work. (Kreso 1979, 68–69)

Nevertheless, the preparation of the Operation Barbarossa required the release of a large part of the staff of German origin and reliance on collaborative formations. Thus, on April 21st, 1941, Dragomir Jovanovic,⁴ as a “confirmed”

3 More in: (Muller 2012)

4 He was born in Požarevac in 1902, graduated from the Law Faculty and soon got employment in the pre-war police. He advanced through hierarchy, but he also became known for his personal connections and financial malversations, for which he was dismissed, but he returned to service very quickly. He was an associate of the German

German associate, was appointed to renew the police activity. The formation that he organized was called the Special police, and its main task was combat against all kinds of illegal activities, with a special emphasis on anti-communism, but nevertheless, the first tasks that this formation received from the Gestapo was completely foreign to its personnel. (Božović 1998, 73–79) Namely, by the end of the April War, on April 16th, 1941, the head of the Operational group of police and security service, including Gestapo as well, called on all Jews to report themselves on April 19th at 8:00 to the city police in Tasmajdan, with a brief remark that “Jews who do not respond to the call will be shot”. This order was followed by another which, also under threat of shooting, said that “all Jews must wear yellow strips around their arms”. (Božović 1998, 53) This marked the beginning of the struggle for life of Yugoslav Jews, many of whom sought refuge in fleeing, either into the interior of occupied Serbia, or across Europe and the world, while the others decided to wait for their fate in the cities. However, as we have already stated, the beginning of the occupation brought drastic measures against the Jewish population, which significantly reduced the possibilities of shelter. (Ristović 2016, 60–61) At that time, Belgrade police officers got their first duties regarding the registration of the Jewish population.⁵ After that, they were tasked to control the wearing of markings, search for those who did not register, collect information about Jewish property, control forced labor tasked to clear the ruins caused by bombing, and the like. (Božović 2014, 92) It is precisely during this initial period of work of the Special police that its basic purpose during the entire occupation is visible – assistance in the execution of Gestapo orders. Bearing in mind that the most common definition of collaboration in domestic historiography says that it represents “cooperation with an occupier in which the necessary boundary of cooperation is transposed under international war law and contributes to the war aspirations of the occupiers (Milićević 2013, 313), it is clear that the collaboration of the Special police began with its actions in implementing discriminatory measures against the

intelligence service during the interwar period, and because of that he held positions of the Mayor of Belgrade and President of the Municipality of City of Belgrade during the occupation, as well as the position of the head of the Serbian State Security with the rank of minister in the government. (Ćirković 2009, 233–235)

5 Istorijски Arhiv Beograda/IAB (Historical Archives of Belgrade), Okružni sud Beograda/OSB (District Court of Belgrade), Trial of Bećarević, Vujković and Gubarev, Bećarević's Hearing, 2.

Jews, for the simple reason that in pre-war police it certainly was not one of the operational tasks.

In the following period, Jews were shot alongside Serbs, within the retaliation by the infamous ratio of 100 executions for one killed, and 50 executions for one wounded German soldier. They were arrested as associates in communist actions and were placed in prisons and detention camps, and subsequently shot. By the order of SS Colonel Wilhelm Fuchs, a transitional camp for Jews on Autokomanda, known as "Topovske šupe", was established, where Jews older than 14 years of age were confined since August 22nd, 1941. At the beginning of the November of the same year, they were transferred from Autokomanda to a newly formed camp on Sajmiste, which will become the final destination of practically all Jews arrested throughout occupied Serbia. From November to early December 1941, the complete liquidation of the male Jewish population was practically completed, and since December of the same year until May of 1942, the liquidation of Jewish families, women and children was completed. Comparing the data on the pre-war Jewish population, which numbered 17,800 together with 1,200 refugees, and if we bear in mind that 14,800 of them were killed, we come to the conclusion that only one fifth of Jews from occupied Serbia managed to survive. (Koljanin 1992, 25,131)

In addition, important support for resolving the Jewish question in Europe was propaganda. Thus collaborators across Europe, including Serbian ones, accepted the already established Nazi propaganda principle.⁶ In occupied Serbia, where population traditionally was not "anti-Jewish", the already used propaganda systems were implemented in order to present pogrom against the Jews as "justified". "Novo vreme", the newspaper with greatest circulation in the occupied Serbia, published articles which propagated anti-Semitism and told that the Jewry is the "The den from which all evil and misfortunes have escaped." The Jews were shown extremely negatively and stereotypically, while their links to the Allies were highlighted, as well as their danger to society. Thus, one of the more extensive articles, which in fact represented the depiction of the anti-Semitic film *The Eternal Jew* (*Der ewige Jude*), described the Jewish nation, culture and way of life as "Symphony of Terror". (Stojanović and Zec 2015, 255–287) Such stereotypical and distinctively anti-Jewish articles were taken over by collaborators at the top of occupied Serbia, who partially or fully accepted the Nazi ideology. Thus, fully

convinced of the victory of Germany and the achievement of the “New Order”, they took on key ideas from National-Socialism about the necessity of protecting the “purity of blood”, and the threat to the nation posed by Jewry, masonry, communism and democracy. The establishment of the Institute for Racial and Biological Research was planned for the purpose of preserving Serbian people from “irregular mixtures” and the general maintenance of “pure race” and “Aryanism” in Europe. (Milosavljević 2006, 25) For example, in personal questionnaires filled in by members of the Special police, an employee was asked to declare whether he is an Aryan, whether he has Jewish relatives or any other connections with Jews, and whether he has Masons among relatives or any other connections with them.⁷ This was accompanied by the adoption of anti-Semitic orders, which have already been mentioned, and recent research gives a completely new picture of the volume of propaganda, its aggressiveness and efficiency during the occupation in Serbia.⁸ This behavior of the propaganda machinery was aimed at indoctrination of Serbian people, the complete twisting of the perception of Jews, and the “justification” of the pogrom against them. Nevertheless, the attitude of Serbs towards Jews cannot be characterized as negative, as these were obviously isolated cases and consequences of the activity of Serbs who were in the function or supported the activity of Nazi Germany. This is also well illustrated by the help that, despite the great danger, many Jewish families received from Serbian people,⁹ as well as cases of issuing false documents in the Belgrade City Administration, which will be discussed later on.

7 IAB, Uprava grada Beograda/UGB (Belgrade city Administration) Specijalna policija/SP (Special police), Odeljenje policijskih agenata/OPA (Department of Police Agents), K.22, K-14; and others.

8 More in: (Stojanović and Zec 2015, 255–289)

9 “I was in hiding with my parents since 1941 until the liberation in the village of Ploče near Kopaonik. In the surrounding villages, several Jewish families were hiding as well. Not only the host with whom we lived, but even the whole village knew that we were Jewish and that the Germans persecuted us. There was not a single person in the village who would betray us. (...) For my salvation, I can thank the Serbian peasants who sympathized with us and who faced the greatest dangers to save us”. (SJO 1952, 42–43)

2. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIAL POLICE IN THE "FINAL SOLUTION"

The German authorities played a key role in the pogrom of Jews in occupied Serbia. Gestapo had a pivotal role in this regard in Europe, and in occupied Serbia, the biggest burden of the entire action was bore by the Wehrmacht, that is, the military forces of Germany, which is almost a unique case in occupied Europe. Gestapo had the explicit role of the commissioner, Wehrmacht of the executor, while only a part of the work was entrusted to the quisling authorities and the Special police. For the whole time the Gestapo ordered the registration, confinement, reprisals, and the final phase of killing in a gas truck, while the Wehrmacht executed it all directly. Quisling authorities had a strictly controlled, ancillary role, so the Ministry of the Interior transmitted orders from German authorities to subordinate organs in the interior and in Belgrade. The good example of this is an order issued in June 1941, where the Banovina administration and the Belgrade municipality are required to release all persons of Jewish origin from the civil service. In general, in addition to the Ministry, the Special police, the county administration, the supervisory services at the locations of forced labor, the administration of the camps in Banjica and Autokomanda, as well as the other parts of the quisling administration in occupied Serbia were involved in cooperation with the occupier in relation to the solution of the Jewish question. (Božović 2003, 78, 96, 103–105)

The Special police was fully affiliated with Gestapo and their cooperation was represented at all levels of both organizations. The chiefs of both forces were in everyday contact, but this was also true for departmental chiefs and associates, regarding their communication with related structures in Gestapo. In addition, there was an official representative of Gestapo in the Special police, who was in the position of liaison officer, looking after the cooperation of these two police forces, and who often put pressure on the quisling authorities. The liaison officer began to act, following Becarevic's¹⁰ admission, in October or November 1941, and he had the function of an interpreter, translator and "connection" between the Gestapo

10 Božidar Bećarević was born on November 23rd, 1909, from father Nikodije and mother Persida, in the village of Desimirovac, near Kragujevac. He never graduated from the Faculty of Law, due to poverty; instead he entered the civil service and soon began to work in the police. He was a "career officer" and during the Second World War in occupied Serbia he held the position of Chief of the IV (Anti-Communist) section of the Department of Special police. VA, NDA, K.133, F. 1, 2/3.

and the Special police. His office was located in the Belgrade City Administration and various German officers often visited this office. Thus, practically, the liaison officers were mediators and transmitters of the commands of the German authorities and the Gestapo to the Special police.¹¹

As Branislav Bozovic concluded in his research, the cooperation of the Special police regarding the “Jewish Question” took place through the III, IV, and VII department of this police force. (Božović, 2003) However, the official link between the German and Serbian police, regarding the “Jewish Question”, was made by the VII department of the Special police, officially dubbed “For Jews and Gypsies”, which did not exist before the war and was established only after the occupation, in order to coordinate the Special police with new tasks, which certainly included treatment of Jews and Gypsies. (Božović 2003, 107–108) Police commissioner Jovan P. Nikolic was in charge of the Seventh section of the Special police until its abolition, and led it with the help of the police clerk Nikola Nikolic. At that time, Jovan Nikolic was a senior police commissioner who was transferred from Zagreb to Belgrade; during the occupation, his activities were characterized by close cooperation with Gestapo. According to Sergije Golubjev, a clerk of the Special police, this section was established in order to enable the assistance of the Special police to the Gestapo in resolving the Jewish question.¹² That could be seen at the very beginning of the occupation, because first activities of the Special police during April, May and partly June, were registration of Jews, checking whether they were carrying armbands, then searching for those who, despite explicit orders, did not report, collecting information about hidden Jews and Jewish property, but also controlling the work of Jews on clearing ruins and supervision of their forced labor. (Božović 2014, 37) In addition, on May 22nd, the Ministry of the Interior ordered Banovina administrations to organize searches in their territories for Jews that had not yet reported or did not return to Belgrade, which was strictly prohibited, as well as to register Jews from other countries, who were hiding in their territories; this required the direct cooperation of the Special police with other autochthonous institutions.¹³ In this period, the quisling police also controlled the implementation of the order on restrictions of food supplies, followed

11 IAB, OSB, Trial of Bećarević, Vujković and Gubarev, Bećarević's Hearing 73–75.

12 IAB, Memoarska grada/MG (Memoirs)-626, „Sergije Golubjev- Stenografske beleške“, 30, 124.

13 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/a, K.144/2, 16.

the implementation of the order to remove Jews from the public service, encompassing lawyers, doctors, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists, but also controlled their removal from educational and cultural institutions and sports-entertainment associations and events. (Božović 2003, 118)

In the first phase of its existence, this section of the Special police submitted a semiannual report in August 1941, stating that up to that time 9,561 Jews, 679 Jewish shops and 3,050 Roma had been registered, and that the section deals on daily basis with the deployment of detainees of the Belgrade City Administration to forced labor, according to the identified need.¹⁴ After the registration was brought to an end, on August 22nd, 1941, Gestapo issued an order to intern Jewish males over 14 years of age in “Topovske šupe” camp at Autokomanda. Interned Jews were not exempted from forced labor, but were returned to the camp after completing their “daily work obligations”. The detainees of this camp, as well as the camp in Banjica, were used as victims of retaliation. In parallel with these processes, the confiscation of Jewish property was brought to an end, although the movable property belonged to the Gestapo while immovable was “taken over” by the headquarters of the General plenipotentiary for economy in occupied Serbia, Franz Neuhausen. From September to December 1941, the Department for Jews and Gypsies significantly reduced its activities, and continued to operate in such a limited extent until the spring of 1943. The work of this section, until its abolition, was largely reduced to occasional organized searches for hidden Jews or their property.¹⁵ The reason for this reduced scope of activities is that practically all Jewish men in occupied Serbia were liquidated until December 1941, after the internment of Jewish families, women and children began, along with their subsequent liquidation since the spring of 1942. After that, the need for a special section that has auxiliary tasks in solving the Jewish question has virtually ceased to exist, for the simple reason that the Jewish question in occupied Serbia was practically “solved”.

In addition to the activities of the VII section, the search operations for Jews were also conducted by the III and IV sections of the Department of Special police, each within their respective competencies. A part of Jews who remained in occupied Belgrade decided to continue their fight and have refused to register,

14 IAB, UGB SP, K.589, 194; (Božović 2003, 116).

15 IAB, MG- 626, „Sergije Golubjev, stenographic notes“, 124–125; (Božović 2003, 116–119).

despite the explicit demand of the German authorities. Thus, the practical work of the Special police regarding the Jewish question was characterized by a continuous search for Jews who did not register and who had often owned documents under a false name.¹⁶ The third section, in accordance with its responsibilities for the control of the border service and foreigners, had the task of pre-empting attempts to illegally transfer Jews to other parts of the former Yugoslavia or to another occupation zone where their lives would be safer, which in most common case was the Italian occupation zone, but also to actively search for Jews with false documents. Gestapo appears very often as the issuer of such orders, that, after a certain denunciation, ordered the Special police to investigate and report on the results.¹⁷ After receiving orders, Ilija Paranos,¹⁸ head of the Department of Special police, also instructed Nikola Gubarev,¹⁹ the head of the Third Section, in charge of foreign affairs, who later acted in accordance with them. (Božović 2003, 116–119) Gubarev received orders or denunciations regarding the issues of hiding of Jews and non-declaration of property, after which he issued warrants, ordered arrests,

16 In most cases, they managed to obtain documents under Serbian names at the Central registration of the City Administration of Belgrade through personal contacts, for money or by their own resourcefulness, and therefore hide their identities. Such cases required the continuation of operative work on the search for Jews, but under false names and mainly with another place of residence. IAB, UGB SP, III-8/21, K.144/23, „Ravić Lev“; III-8/22, K.144/24, „Borenić Andrija“, III-8/6, K.144/8, „Baher S. Roza“ and others.

17 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/10, K.144/12, „Majer Z. Šami“, 7; III-8/17, K.144/19, „Majer“, 2; and others.

18 Ilija K. Paranos was born on December 1st, 1902 in Šabac, from father Konstantin and mother Ana. He was a lawyer and a respected sports worker in pre-war Belgrade, and began his service as a clerck at the Belgrade City Administration. Soon he was transferred to the police and quickly promoted through the ranks. He was a personal companion of prince Pavle Karađorđević and Milan Stojadinović, and in the fall of 1941 he was entrusted by the occupier with the position of the chief of the Department of the Special police, where he remained until the end of the occupation. Vojni arhiv/VA (Military Archives), Nedićeva arhiva/NDA (Archive of Milan Nedić), K.133, 4.

19 Nikola Gubarev was born in Dnipropetrovsk on June 2nd, 1905, from father Dmitri, music professor and mother Anna. In his hometown, he studied the gymnasium, and later, through Sevastopol and Istanbul, he came to the Kingdom of SHS in 1921. He had various jobs until he was employed at the Belgrade City Administration, and to the Belgrade police soon after. He gained the experience there, and after the April war, in view of his connections with the German intelligence service, he was placed first at the head of the IV section, from which he was soon replaced and placed on the head of the III section, where he stayed until his escape to Vienna at the beginning of 1944. IAB, OSB, Trial of Bećarević, Vujković and Gubarev, Gubarev's Hearing, 1–3.

and often conducted interrogations personally. A case "processed" in such manner was sent along with the arrestees either to Department for Jews and Gypsies,²⁰ Gestapo, which continued to conduct the final solution of the Jewish question,²¹ or directly to the camp.²² Until today, in the archives of the Third section, there have been at least 36 subjects on Jewish groups, families or individuals who were interrogated. During 1941, within this section, 15 cases (41.66%) were started, while another 21 cases (58.33%) were started in 1942, which in terms of quantity indicates unabated and somewhat increased activity of the Third section regarding Jews during the second year of the occupation.²³ The activity of this section regarding the Jewish question continued until the last days of December of 1942, when Finci Albert under the false name of Djuric Aleksandar was arrested and handed over to the Department for Jews and Gypsies, and then to the Gestapo.²⁴

The work of the IV section regarding the Jewish question was primarily reflected in the interrogation of Jews who were accused of being Communists. The chief of this section, Bozidar Becarevic, at the trial after the war, first pointed out that "Gestapo had its own special section for Jews, and the Administration of City of Belgrade had nothing to do with Jews".²⁵ Such a formulation is quite indicative, especially since there was a whole section in charge of the affairs of Jews and Roma within the Special police, but also because the anti-communist section, led by Becarevic himself, on many occasions interrogated Jews antifascists or arrested them, and then delivered to the VII department for interrogation. (Božović 2003, 129–134) Becarevic himself admitted this, only one month and seven days after giving false testimony. He changed the previous testimony and said: "No one asked

20 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/1, K.144/3, „Mandilović Avram“, 3–4; III-8/5, K.144/7, „Pijade Samuilo“, 4; III-8/11, K.144/13, „Novogradski I. Benjamin“, 2; and others.

21 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/27, K.144/29, „Piskar L. Emil“; III-8/31, K.144/33, „Vajner Ida“; III-8/23, K.144/25, „Alfandari Rašela“; and others.

22 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/25, K.144/27, „Bernfeld Feliks“, III-8/19, K.144/21, „Davidovac Olivera- Vera“, III-8/18, K.144/20, „Šljivić- Fišer Tereza“, III-8/6, K.144/8, „Baher Roza“; and others.

23 IAB, UGB SP, K.144. Branislav Božović in his work (Božović 2003, 125) states that the III section of the Special police continued in 1942 with "unabated" engagement in the cases of hidden Jews, and from the analysis of the data we can see that the volume of work of III section in the number of cases had increased in relation to the first year of occupation.

24 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/34, K.144/36, „Đurić M. Aleksandar“.

52 | 25 IAB, OSB, Trial of Bećarević, Vujković and Gubarev, Bećarević's Hearing, 33.

for it from me (assistance in arresting the Jews: R.T.), neither my section did it, except if it was a matter of activity on the line of the CPY. The Special department, whose head was Jovan Nikolic, was responsible for this. If such persons would come to jail of the IV section on any basis, they were regularly taken to the department for Jews and Gypsies.”²⁶

The valuable data for examining this problem comes from the case of a Jew named Shami Mayer. Namely, one intelligence section of the Serbian Volunteer Command noticed Mayer in Belgrade and reported him to the Third section in December 1941, to which the new section head, Nikola Gubarev, ordered the search at the registered address. This search has not yielded results, so the SVC has criticized the work of Special police and complained to the head of the Department Paranos, the Ministry of the Interior, but also to the President of the “National Salvation Government” Milan Nedic.²⁷ Shortly thereafter, the IV section, which was led by the most capable policeman of Belgrade Bozidar Becarevic, was also involved in this case. From this example we see that the Special police acted very diligently regarding the investigations, cooperating along with the autochthonous institutions, in this case the Serbian Volunteer Command, the squads and the commissariats of the police, all according to the orders of the Gestapo. In addition, the Special police was very homogeneous on this issue, and the cooperation between the sections, which formally had strictly separated powers, was at a high level, especially when Gestapo was exerting pressure to “conclude” a case. The anti-Communist section often interrogated Jewish Communists, as in the case of Jela Pijade,²⁸ the nephew of the famous Yugoslav communist Moshe Pijade, then a doctor named Levi Kurt,²⁹ but also many others.³⁰ In addition, the IV section, led by Becarevic, also investigated how Jews managed to obtain documents under Serbian names. In the case of Josef Baruh, who went under a false name of Borenic Andrija, he managed to break the entire system and prevented the obtaining the documents in the future.³¹ It is precisely this activity of Becarevic, as the head of the Anti-Communist Section, that broke the connection through which the Jews

26 IAB, OSB, Trial of Bećarević, Vujković and Gubarev, Bećarević's Hearing, 70–71.

27 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/10, K.144/12, „Majer Z. Šami”, 1–14.

28 IAB, UGB SP, IV-8/7, K.186/4, „Jela V. Pijade“.

29 IAB, UGB SP, IV-2/31, K.166/6, „Levi E. Kurt“.

30 More in: (Božović 2003. 129–134)

31 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/22, K.144, 2–29.

managed to get documents with Serbian names, and reveals how much the Special police cared to fully implement Gestapo orders. Although Becarevic formally, along with his department, had nothing to do with the arrest of Jews who were hiding, he tried to “break” the organized issuing of ID cards with Serbian names, thus preventing the hiding of Jews and practically discovering them. This example clearly shows that the Special police, with its departments, acted as a very monolithic organization, often surpass limits of each section, all for the purpose of diligent implementation of the Gestapo orders, which were certainly not among the regular affairs of the pre-war police from which the Special police was formed. All of the above reveals the fact that the Special police, despite not directly participating in the pogrom against Jews, certainly worked on auxiliary affairs in the conduct of anti-Jewish orders, arrest and interrogation of Jews, as well as their handing over to the Gestapo or confinement in the camp on Banjica, which makes it responsible for the cooperation in the implementation of the “final solution”.

3. CONCLUSION

Looking at the general context of the creation of the Special police, it could be concluded that the general idea of the Nazi leadership at the time of Operation Barbarossa was to rely heavily on quisling police formations throughout Europe; probably the most ardent examples were police forces in the Baltic countries. Germans were welcomed as liberators from the Soviet Union in this area, and the auxiliary police turned hastily towards the Nazi ideology out of hatred towards the USSR and had a significant share in the liquidation of the Jewish population. Unlike already mentioned cases of various police forces in Europe, the Special police strictly acted on auxiliary affairs, which is also related to general distrust towards Serbs, which is why Gestapo and Wehrmacht tried to completely control the execution of the “Final Solution” in occupied Serbia. In such circumstances, the Special police received strictly determined auxiliary services regarding the Jewish question and did not participate directly in the liquidations.

Regarding the Jewish question, the Special police acted strictly on the orders of the Gestapo since the beginning of the occupation, but after the definite formation of special sections within this police, each section received strictly prescribed tasks. Since then, until the end of the occupation or the existence and

jurisdiction, but in exceptional cases also outside the jurisdiction. However, the domestic police in its work were referred to cooperation with many other institutions, besides Gestapo. Thus, in the affairs of denunciations and search for Jews, it mainly worked with Gestapo,³² the district leaders,³³ and later established the Serbian State Guard.³⁴ In some cases, the Serbian Volunteer Command also carried out denunciations, which sometimes led to strained relations between the two quisling organizations.³⁵ After an arrest of Jews, the hearings were conducted and they were sent to the Department for Jews and Gypsies, and then to the camp or the Gestapo, whereby the Special police completed its operation on a single Jewish case. The VII section, led by Jovan Nikolic, carried the greatest burden of processing these “subjects”. However, besides him, Nikola Gubarev and Bozidar Becarevic, leading their sections, were also responsible for the execution of the “final solution”. Also, it should not be forgotten that Ilija Paranos, as a man who led the Special police, certainly took part in the direct implementation of the occupiers’ decisions by transferring their orders, which he received in everyday contact, to his directly subordinate section chiefs, who continued act on these orders. Svetozar Vujkovic was also involved in this work, primarily because many Jews were first taken to the Banjica camp, where he was one of the chiefs, before being transferred to another camp. In addition, there are data on the plunder of Jewish property in the Banjica camp,³⁶ for which Vujkovic was certainly responsible, as he was the head of the camp and member of the Special police.

In the end, it is also necessary to examine the motives of the Special police officers for their participation in the implementation of the “Final Solution”. Namely, by analyzing the collaboration of the Lithuanian autochthonous police in the pogrom against the Jews Michael McQueen concluded that the members of this organization were led by five motives - revenge, opportunism, exposition,

32 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/13, K.144/15, 1; III-8/15, K.144/17, 2, 5.

33 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/12, K.144/14, „Binenfeld R. Egon- Nikola“, 4.

34 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/17, K.144/19, „Pijade Lazar“, 4.

35 IAB, UGB SP, III-8/10, K.144/12, „Majer Z. Šami“, 2–7.

36 Arhiv Jugoslavije/AJ (Archives of Yugoslavia), Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača/ DK (State commission for determining crimes of occupier and its helpers), Fund 110, inv. no. 1937, 277, „Statement of Milan Kobiljski-Lala, key-keeper in the Banjica camp“.

anti-Semitism and self-enrichment.³⁷ We can characterize the concepts of revenge and exposure in the context of officers of the Special police as inadequate, since they correspond to the geopolitical moment of the Lithuanian nation, while opportunism and self-enrichment were represented, and probably partly anti-Semitism. Namely, opportunism, as McQueen defined it, was an expression of a large proportion of Special police personnel, as can be seen from their actions, given that they worked on a whole range of jobs for the Germans. Their social position during the occupation was much better than the majority of the population of the occupied Serbia, and the members of the Assembly of police agents were prepared to do everything to ensure that the situation lasts as long as possible. Additionally, the reasons for “good social and financial standing” were the abuse and financial fraud committed by many agents. (Tucovic 2017) This is especially evident in the context of the “Final Solution”, especially regarding the stereotypes that the Jews were in a financially good position, which could potentially be tempting to the Special police for blackmail and robbery. In addition, anti-Semitism may indeed be one of the less represented motives of these policemen, as it was the ideology that daily newspapers and other propaganda outlets presented and, depending on the personality, were adopted to a various degrees.

Bearing in mind all the facts mentioned above, it is clear that the role of the Special police, and therefore its chiefs, in the implementation and resolution of the “Jewish question” was auxiliary, but at the same time very significant. Certainly, the responsibility for the pogrom of Jews in occupied Serbia falls partly on persons that held positions in the quisling police, but also on clerks, referents and agents of the Special police, who directly implemented these measures. Nevertheless, at the very end, it is necessary is to point out that, unlike many police units throughout Europe during World War II, the Special police in occupied Serbia did not carry out the liquidation of the Jewish population.

37 Revenge, according to McQueen, was directed against the Soviets, due to their occupation, then opportunism, which manifested itself among those who occupied important positions under the German occupation, without worrying what they should in return. Those who led the exposition served at the time of the Soviet occupation and wanted to “redeem” themselves, while he last two motives were anti-Semitism and self-enrichment. (McQueen 2004, 1–17)

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Kolaboracija Specijalne policije prilikom sprovođenja „Konačnog rešenja” u okupiranoj Srbiji (1941–1944)

Članak prikazuje delatnost Specijalne policije na rešavanju Jevrejskog pitanja u okupiranoj Srbiji, pre svega na pomoćnim poslovima Gestapoa i saradnji sa drugim kvislinškim i autohtonim institucijama. Tokom 1941. i 1942. godine, kada je popisao, pritvoren i likvidiran najveći deo jevrejskog stanovništva, ali i tokom naredne dve godine okupacije, Specijalna policija je gotovo kontinuirano delovala po nalogima Gestapoa i time stupila u kolaboraciju, vršeći pomoćne poslove, a samim tim i pomažući pripremanju likvidacije svojih sugrađana jevrejske nacionalnosti. Cilj članka jeste da, uz pomoć naučne literature i istraživanja arhivske građe, da opšti osvrt na generalni kontekst kolaboracije Specijalne policije na poslovima rešavanja Jevrejskog pitanja, o čemu je prethodnih decenija već pisano. Koristeći tematski metod strukturisanja rada, autor je nastojao da prikaže generalno, ali i kroz pojedinačne primere, aktivnosti Specijalne policije na saradnji sa okupacionim i kvislinškim institucijama, po predmetima Jevreja u okupiranoj Srbiji, ali i da to stavi u globalni kontekst kolaboracionističkih policija u Evropi.

Ključne reči: jevrejsko pitanje, okupirana Srbija, Specijalna policija, Kolaboracija.

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**HOLOCAUST AND
RESTITUTION IN FORMER
YUGOSLAVIA: Legal and
Historical Challenges**

**PART II
MEMORIES AND MEMORIALS**

THE WATCHED MEMORIAL: JASENOVAC

Original Scientific Article

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The paper seeks to show what sort of memory of the concentration camp Jasenovac was cultivated in the SFR Yugoslavia, by reviewing the work and memorial practices applied in the Jasenovac Memorial site. The focus is on the eighties of the twentieth century, when the Yugoslav narrative was tempted. It is shown how the gradual break up of such a narrative reflected on the memory of the concentration camp Jasenovac. The paper seeks to point out on the very close links between the Jasenovac themes and the central state narratives.

Keywords: Memorial site Jasenovac, concentration camp Jasenovac, culture of memory, breakup of Yugoslavia.

TODAY, MORE THAN SEVENTY YEARS AFTER ITS closing, Concentration Camp Jasenovac (hereinafter CC Jasenovac) is the topic that attracts public attention mostly in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is current in political life as a matter of contention, both within these countries and in their dynamic inter-relations. Printed press and media, TV shows and the like, often touch on topics related to CC Jasenovac. To date, more than fifteen documentaries that have Jasenovac as their main subject have been filmed, as well as several others which deal with the topic of exterminations in this camp, among other things. Due to this, there is a certain interest in this topic on the global scene, with researchers from the EU, Russia, Israel and the United States. It certainly is not easy to answer the question why this is so or what is the meaning of the word Jasenovac in public, especially in these three Balkan countries. By 2000, about 1128 books, 1544 memoirs and scientific articles, and 108

collections of documents were published about CC Jasenovac, and to date this number has significantly increased (Mirkovic 2000, 347-370).¹ Cultural memory studies can give some key answers to this topic, however, despite a mass production in this field, the least number of papers are on to this subject. Therefore, some of the key questions for the further research would be: How did the memories of CC Jasenovac form in Yugoslavia? What sort of the process of diversification the memory had gone through when the country collapsed? What is the memory of CC Jasenovac today in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina? Conscious of the limitations, in this paper we will analyze how the memorial site of Jasenovac (hereinafter MS Jasenovac), as a representative institution, kept and formed a memory of CC Jasenovac in the SFR Yugoslavia in the last decade of its existence. It is precisely this period that is significant, because there is a break in the previous official discourse, while the narrative of CC Jasenovac is one of the main “pins” that split the Yugoslav space of memory. It is through this hole that the vision of the common future of the people of Yugoslavia poured out. Aware of the lack of research and the complexity of the “thematic of Jasenovac”, with this article we give an annex to the “history of the history of CC Jasenovac”. According to Todor Kuljic, the complexity of memory imposes a two-dimensional sense of culture of memory. Firstly, this is the term that marks the overall non-academic public use of the past; Secondly, this is a transnational scientific discipline that deals with the interpretation and explanation of various forms of keeping and distorting the past (Kuljić 2006, 6–8).

In order to give an answer to the question: What kind of memory did CC Jasenovac have in the SFR Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s, that is, just before the break-up of the country, we have to go back a little bit in time and see how the projection of the past was formed after the end of the Second World War. As noted by Olga Manojlovic Pintar, the affirmation of Yugoslav socialism after the break up with the USSR in 1948 happened through putting the emphasis on the Yugoslav peculiarity, primarily through the visualization of the Second World War and the uniqueness of the National Liberation Struggle (hereinafter: NLS). As in many countries after the war, the motives for the fight against fascism, resistance and warfare are highlighted. In addition to organizing numerous ceremonies and commemorations and erection of monumental forms with the figure of partisan

¹ This number seems impressive, but it should be noted that in numerous bibliographic units, CC Jasenovac is not the main topic of the research.

- warrior, one of the fundamental factors in building the identity of the new Yugoslav community was the institution of museum. Museums are seen as places of direct contact between the present and the past, they presented the ideas on which the state was built. This also referred to memorial sites or memorials built throughout the country in the early sixties characterized by an abstract monumental form and where every visitor was given the illusion of direct communication with the past (Manojlović Pintar 2014, 144–170).

In the case of the memorial in Jasenovac, the conceptual solution was given in the proposal of the architect Bogdan Bogdanovic, who designed his memorial sites as centers where the images of past and present were merged with the ideas of a desired future. Bogdanovic's concept envisioned building of a memorial in the area of the central camp Serb. *Cigлана*, located not far from the town of Jasenovac, on the left bank of the Sava River. Here the Ustasha, without the presence of the Nazis, carried out their racial politics, creating an ethnically clean state. With the withdrawal of Ustasha units at the end of the war, the camp was mined and almost demolished, as well as a large part of town of Jasenovac. When the works at the memorial had started, the rather distraught area of the central camp was cleaned. In 1963, the construction works on the central monument and museum with a cinema hall begun, as well as the marking of the mass graves located nearby, on the other bank of the Sava River. The monument "Stone Flower" is intended to represent the basic metaphor of indestructibility of life - life is stronger than death: the flower is a symbol of eternal renewal, with its roots lying on the tombs while the high dome is facing the sun and the sky, i.e. the freedom and the future. The Stone Flower was officially opened on July 4, 1966, on the National Day of the Soldier, while the Museum with the cinema hall was opened two years later, on the same day (Matausić 2003, 150–153). It should be noted that in abstract monuments, their meaning and symbolism complement or even determine legends or museum settings that are installed in their immediate surroundings.

Heike Karge in her study *Sećanje u kamenu – Okamenjeno sećanje* (Karge 2014),² consulted the documentation and archives of SUBNOR (Union of Associations of Veterans of People's Liberation War), this "guardian of memories", putting the flash light onto the process of forming the MS Jasenovac. This process led to the change in memory discourse and creation of new narratives related

to the NOB (People's Liberation Struggle), when, at the beginning of the sixties, civilian victims received recognition through the establishment of numerous such memorial sites and places of remembrance; the concentration camps survivors received the membership of SUBNOR, etc. In fact, the creation of "appropriate" memorials at places where many civilians died without fighting, such as Jasenovac, Kragujevac, Sajmište and others, raised a problem from the very beginning how these memorials could fit into the central elements of Yugoslav politics of memory. They didn't speak in favor of brotherhood and unity of the Yugoslav peoples nor about the joint heroic partisan struggle; they spoke instead about collaboration and a bloody civil war.

By universalizing the memories of the victims of the camp, the Jasenovac Memorial started to work. In the next decades (1966-1990), it preserved a narrative that would try to convert the mass extermination of civilians into a patriotic act of dying for the new Yugoslavia. Until the end of the 1980s, more than four million people visited it, thus making out of Jasenovac one of the most visited museums/memorials both in Croatia and Yugoslavia too. A large part of the visitors was comprised of students who visited the Jasenovac memorial on their study trips, where the curators played the role of tourist guides and presenters of the museum exhibition, which they did not set.³ But what was the story the MS Jasenovac told to its visitors? What could be learned about this place of memories from the museum exhibition and presentation?

The visit to MS Jasenovac usually had three compulsory elements. The first was screening of a documentary film in the cinema hall an adjacent to the museum.⁴ We will rely on work of Ana Krsinic Lozica for the analysis of some of the screened films, in particular for the Jasenovac by Gustav Gavrin from 1945, where she says: "The goal of identity politics present in the movie is to construct the" people "as a unique, comprehensive category that includes different national, religious

3 The new exhibition, created in collaboration with the curators from CC Jasenovac, was put only in 1988. During the seventies, due to the large number of visitors, the museum worked in two shifts, while during the summer period, they employed additional workers for the ticket office and the museum shop. Archive of the MS Jasenovac, unsorted materials, Report on the work of the MS Jasenovac in 1989.

4 Since its opening, the MS Jasenovac since had presented several movies, however, all of them used the materials from the film Jasenovac, bz Gustava Gavrina (1945). For its own needs, the MS Jasenovac produced the movie "The Evangelion of Evil" by Gojko Kastratovic (1973), and ten years later "The Blood and Ashes of Jasenovac, by Lordan Zafranovic (1983). Mataušić 2003, 154.

and class backgrounds. The Ustasha authorities are opposed to the people and equated with the occupier whom the people want to exterminate, while the crimes in the Jasenovac camp are completely equated to the crimes of fascism which made the entire Europe mourn... Beside the construction of the people, the movie has another important function, and that is to show evidence for the crimes in order to punish the perpetrators. While the narrator specifies the crimes that took place in the camp, a collage of videos and photographs of corpses and mutilated human remains can be seen on the screen..." (Krsinić Lozica 2018, 143–148). Characteristic is the voice of the narrator who narrates very suggestively throughout the entire movie, taking the role of victims and thus speaking on their behalf on one hand, and representing the voice of people on the other.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Council of the Jasenovac Council deemed this and similar interpretations of the subject of concentration camp no longer adequate for transmitting the desired messages to the target groups, that is, students and younger generations. The movies were, therefore, supposed to be more educational in nature. It was decided to: "look for a new approach in the movie narrative on the Jasenovac camp". Thus, the last movie filmed for the needs of the MS Jasenovac was produced in 1983 - *The Blood and Ashes of Jasenovac*, by Lordan Zafranovic (Poruke, April 22, 1981): "Here the identity constellations are much more complex. Narrator and the witnesses point out to those who suffered the most: The Serbs, Jews and Roma People, adding the Communists to this group as well. However, they emphasize that the victims were of different ethical background coming from different cities and places in Yugoslavia. These responsible for the crimes in Jasenovac are spoken of in a less passionate and more factually manner than in Gavrin's film... The identity construction in the movie is closed and additionally pointed to with the audio recording of Tito's speech in Glina. In this speech, it is said that Jasenovac was not just about the nationalist extermination of members of different nations, but about the extermination of the communists, and therefore these crimes should be regarded as the "man against man" crimes. The guilty for the Jasenovac should not be sought in a whole nation, but in those who then ruled and who were the traitors of the same nation. After the speech, the frames that affirm the burning the bottom of a socialist society without inter-ethnic hatred." (Krsinić Lozica 2018, 148-150). It should be added that both films contain a lot of moving scenes, which are certainly inevitable, but Zafranovic's film has prolongs the frames of mutilated and tortured bodies in

order to increase the shock effect and create a strong emotional reaction of the spectators.

The second compulsory element of the visit to the memorial was the museum exhibition, which was completely devised by the Museum of the Revolution of the People of Croatia from Zagreb, and which was exhibited in Jasenovac for a full twenty years (1968–1988). Ksenija Deskovic, the author of the exhibition, based her concept on the two basic leitmotifs that stretched through the entire exhibition. The first leitmotif was based on the horrors that took place in Jasenovac; they were to ought be linked to the system of fascist camps in Europe so that it could be shown that they were not the product of certain pathological types, but of the fascist ideology, the bearers of which here were the Ustasha. The second leitmotif represents the struggle and the final victory of anti-fascist forces gathered in NOB (People's Liberation Struggle) whose organizer and leader was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. In line with this, the exhibition was split into two parts, the general part of the Ustasha coming to power, their discriminatory laws and the conduct of terror, and the movement of resistance and the suffering of the communists. Only the second part of the exhibition was completely dedicated to the camp. Thus, in the museum space, along with documents and objects, it could be seen that the perpetrators of the crime were part of a larger system that orders and oversees them, while the victims were all the peoples of Yugoslavia, represented in this order: the Serbs, the Croats, the Communists, the Jews, the Muslims, the Roma and the others. Among other things, the Gestapo is depicted, as the author suggests, as "the supreme controller of the execution of the task of destroying our peoples". Further on, the exhibition abounds with objects and weapons with which the liquidations in the camp were carried out, photographs of the murdered and the imprisoned, and documents describing the ways in which people were tortured and killed. Certainly, one part of the exhibition is dedicated to the role of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the camp life, numerous communist prisoners were highlighted, their role in organizing assistance to inmates and organizing the uprising in the camp⁵.

5 Archive of the MS Jasenovac, Agreement between the Museum of the Revolution of People of Croatia and the MS Jasenovac između Muzeja revolucije naroda Hrvatske i SP Jasenovac iz 1968; Conceptual solution for the exhibition of the museum in Jasenovac. *Poruke*, 2.10.1974.

After this, visitors would take a walk through the park, that is, through the area of the former camp where, according to Bogdanovic's concept, different earth mounds represented certain locations of camp buildings. At the Stone Flower monument, one could admire its universal values and, at the same time, glimpse of the entire area of the camp. Since the end of the seventies, the MS Jasenovac recorded ca. 300,000 visitors a year. Here is how the museum guide comments on the atmosphere in 1979: "Many excursions are organized through the travel agencies ... They all organize visits in May and June, which creates difficulties. Our museum is not spacious and all of them are generally rushing through it. With such crowds nothing much can be seen or hear ... Often, the entire experience is reduced to watching the film, with a speed run through the museum, while the monument and cemeteries are entirely skipped because some guides hurry groups due to the overloaded schedule" (Poruke, April 22, 1979).

Hajke Karge observes that in socialist Yugoslavia, beside the federal elites, the republican elites too tried to influence the narratives about the past. The increase in the autonomy of the republics led to the expansion of the official memory offer to the point that the republican-ethnic narratives became the competition to the general, Yugoslavian federal ones. During the seventies when federalism was gaining power, the search for an interpretation of the past, about which there would be a consensus and from which a notion of a common future could be built, became the central theme of the Yugoslav identity politics. After the death of Josip Broz Tito, the aforementioned elites were increasingly confronted with contemporary external influences, which began to bring about changes in the interpretations of the past (Karge 2014, 134–135). Primarily, the topic of the Holocaust began to spark international discussions by broadcasting of the American series "Holocaust" 1978/1979⁶. Until then, national discussions in Europe followed their own rhythms, depending on the political situation and the role of that country in the Second World War. Since 1980, it is the extermination of European Jews has

6 The series was premiered in the United States in 1978 and had gained great ratings. Popularity of this show was even used to repair the US and Israel relations that had stalled into a dead end. The following year, it was screened in West Germany, where it broke all records of ratings. After the broadcast of the episodes, special open studios were organized where historians answered numerous questions of spectators. Approximately 30% of the population was watching, and according to the tests, 60% of them were distressed or felt uncomfortable. This started a new stage in the struggle for the Germans to accept and face Nazism as part of their historical heritage. Volfrum 156–157; Arad 220–221.

come in focus of the war memory. At the same time, instead of the heroes and martyrs of antifascist resistance, special attention is paid to individual victims, survivors from concentration camps, etc. (Radonjić 2010, 53–54; Levy and Sznajder 2005; Young 1991; Hilberg 2001; Evans 1990). In Yugoslavia, a lot of narratives began to surface, many of them bearing the theme of national suffering. These particular national memories will soon become dominant and then excluding and exclusive. Such development will accompany the emergence of stereotypes from the informal to the public sphere, which would strengthen national homogenization (Djerić 2009, 66–68). The disintegration of the common memory took place, among other things, through the topic of CC Jasenovac, which, due to the above-mentioned practices, has become more and more in the focus of the Yugoslav public's interest, in proportion to the discovery and expansion of black holes in the collective memory.

The MS Jasenovac tried to get out of its decennial role of the educational and information center and give answers to the challenges that were ever more preset in the public. Two academic conferences were organized in the MS Jasenovac, one in 1984 and the other in 1986. However, looking at the proceedings from these conferences (Borović 1985; Smreka 1989), several observations can be made, which the participants themselves pointed out. It was ascertained that there had been a chronic lack of research, arbitrariness in writing about the camp, especially in the press, as well as the presence of numerous untruths and free interpretations of events. Scientific approach to the subject was attempted in order to give an alternative to narratives that ruined the official discourse primarily by highlighting the topic of a civil war. However, in all authors there was a noticeable silence regarding the questions that had been lingering since the mid-fifties when this memorial site was built in Yugoslavia: namely, the question of the identity of the victims of the camp, and their number, as well as who was responsible for them?

Fahrudin Ajanovic, President of the Council of the MS Jasenovac, member of the Presidency of the SUBNOR for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a Jasenovac prisoner, gave the opening speech at the conference in 1984. In this speech he said that the people of Yugoslavia were interned in the camps because they opposed the occupation in which their basic rights and freedoms were taken from them; their toils and death was an integral part of the NOB: "It is necessary to oppose the interpretations of neo-Nazis and neo-fascists, that the hundreds of thousands killed

70 | in concentration camps in Yugoslavia were victims of alleged internal conflict

between our peoples, and that the occupying forces did not have a share in it. The fact that Ustasha, Chetniks and other quisling groups were the most frequent perpetrators of such crimes in the camps, does not release the masterminds and the main perpetrators of those crimes from responsibility... Regarding the former Ustasha-Nazi camp in Jasenovac, there are tendencies to cover up the truth about the crimes and genocidal character of this camp which, according to the number of people killed, was the largest camp in Europe, or second largest, immediately after Auschwitz in Poland.”(Ajanović 1985, 8–11). Ana Pozar, director of the MS Jasenovac, said: “A death in Jasenovac was a possible prospect for political opponents of fascism, primarily the communists, but also other anti-fascists who opposed the conduct of terror, as well as for the members of certain nations that were to be exterminated according the fascist ideology.” In the end, she said that Jasenovac was the largest camp in Yugoslavia and one of the largest in Europe (Pozar 1985, 4). Only a year earlier, the MS Jasenovac published a tourist guide in English, French and Russian, where it was clearly pointed out that, based on the number of victims, Jasenovac was the third camp in Europe (Jokić 1983, 4). In the paper given by Antun Miletic, it was noticeable that the author did not discriminate or deliberately skipped to mention the national segment as a factor in selecting people destined for the camps. Thus, in one place he claimed that the Ustasha massively and individually imprisoned people on a racial and religious basis, while in another, he added the political basis to the racial and religious one (Miletic 1985, 18-22). The similar tendency can be observed in the papers of Mile Konjevic and the national hero Jefka Sasic.

Therefore, Ustasha, Chetniks and local quislings, but also Nazis and other fascists were marked as perpetrators, while the victims were recognized in the members of the NOB, communists and other anti-fascists and, only in the end, those who were interned on the racial and religious grounds (often without a clear picture who belonged to this category). The number of victims, compared to other camps, places the CC Jasenovac among the largest camps in the WW Two and as the second or the third largest in Europe. The conference timidly opened several important questions, among other things, why the Partisans had not tried to liberate the camp before?

The second academic conference took place in 1986 during the trial of Andrija Aktukovic, former Minister of Internal Affairs of the NDH (Independent State of Croatia), who was extradited to Yugoslavia from the USA after 30 years. In

addition to this, the reactions stirred up by the writing of Bogoljub Kocovic were still present.⁷ It opened again the debate about the number of Yugoslav victims in the war and in the concentration camps. Also, somewhat earlier, a delegation from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, led by Vladimir Dedijer, the founder of the so-called Committee for Genocide, visited MS Jasenovac. The fact that this conference was opened by Ante Markovic, President of the Croatian Parliament, shows how important this topic had become. Comparing to the previous one, this conference had far more participants and observers from all parts of Yugoslavia, including scholars from the USSR and Norway. Ante Markovic, among other things, said: "Jasenovac and its surroundings were immediately turned into a death workshop by the Ustasha in which mass and individual liquidations were carried out, mainly of Serbs, Jews and Roma people, but also of Croats, Muslims, Slovenes and other peoples and nationalities, primarily communists and anti-fascists," after which he immediately continued with ready-made narrative: "The Commission has found that the victims of the camp were members of all our peoples and nationalities and that they were brought to the camp primarily because of their ideological determination or that they differed from the oppressors by faith and race. Based on the collected data, it was concluded that ca 700,000 people lost their lives in the Jasenovac camps." Similar observations and messages were also sent by the representative of SUBNOR and the president of the Council of the MS Jasenovac and former detainee Ante Miljkovic (Smreka 1989, 5–14).⁸

The paper given by Zvonimir Separovic, Dean of the Faculty of Law in Zagreb was also interesting. It summed up some of the holistic opinions about the Holocaust and asked: "What are the specificities in the example of Jasenovac? It is characteristic of the victims such are the Jews, that they are, by some sort of historical inertia, persecuted for over 2 millennia ... then happened the Second World War and they, so to speak, put their heads under the knife. The Jewish race was

7 The book was published in London. Kočović 1985; Based on statistical calculations, Kočović made an estimate of 150,000 - 200,000 Serbian victims in the NDH. This put him next to Franjo Tudjman, to the category of those who were breaking down the official narrative and calling for a revision of the history of the NOB. In 1989, Tudjman made an estimate of 30,000 - 40,000 of the total victims of CC Jasenovac. Mijatović, Sentić 1992, 1 - 18. Pregled procena broja žrtava logora: Geiger 2013, 211 - 242.

8 On the occasion of commemoration in Jasenovac the following year in April 1988, the same messages were repeated by Ante Markovic and Miljkovic, as the main speakers during, the following year. The title in *Vjesnik* reads "The Most Beautiful Monument to the Sacrifice for Freedom". *Vjesnik*, 04/20/1987.

at that time and in that respect non-aggressive, they actually let the Nazis to take them away...”. Then he proceeded: “On the contrary, our people here did not surrender. The people here are rebellious, belligerent and won’t put their heads under the knife ... The attempt to escape from the camp is the proof that victims here did not let go easily, that they still had faith, and that they would have invested the last atom of their lives, trying to take part in what was destined to be a failed escape...” (Separović 1989, 125–135). Interesting observations are also found in the paper of Jefta Sasic, general of the JNA (Yugoslavian National Army) and the national hero. Referring to Bogoljub Kocovic’s book and his assessment of demographic losses in Yugoslavia, he said: “... people are far more active in these questions in the emigration than we here know. If nothing more, the emigration supports formation of ideological and political anti-communist and anti-Yugoslav positions with quasi-arguments. One of the most prominent actors associated with multinational companies is exactly the emigrant Dr Bogoljub Kocovic” (Šašić 1989, 137–144).

There had been a noticeable increase in number of academic papers, primarily by historians, that try to open some significant questions and to supplement the shortcomings in the research. Although ideological interpretations of the past were still present, there was a clearer emphasis on the genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma people. On the other hand, the official number of 700,000 victims was defended as one of the foundations of the Jasenovac narrative. Thus, a visible gap was created between the “guardians of memory”, incarnated in the members of the SUBNOR and the officials of the communist party and state, on one hand, and the scholars on the other, who begun to question some of the foundations of the narrative.

The last effort to deal with the subject of camp with the academic approach was made by the MS Jasenovac when it hosted the conference in 1989, as a part of the large project Yugoslavians in Fascist Prisons, Detention Centers and Concentration Camps. The conference was entitled *The Calvary of the Yugoslavs in World War II*. Although the papers from this conference were never published, the report shows that the dominant subject was the identity of the victims and that a great debate was led about the number of killed in the Jasenovac camp.⁹

The MS Jasenovac used to organize two annual commemorations. The first was in memory of the escape of the prisoners from Jasenovac, which happened

9 Archive of MS Jasenovac, Report on work in 1989.

just before the end of the war, and the second one was organized on the Day of the Soldier. Beside paying homage to the victims, there were other events, some of which lasted for two days, that were organized on the 22nd April. The young people gathered at the even called "Youth Meeting", where folklore and other cultural events were held in addition to the visit to the memorial itself. This event was created during to youth work activities that each year helped the construction works in the area of MS Jasenovac. "Youth Meeting" gradually suppressed the other commemorative gathering, by expansion of its contents and increase in the number of participants. Under the slogan "Never to happen again," the program included the attendance of high-ranking state officials who held speeches broadcast by television and other media. In addition to a series of events,¹⁰ a literary/poetry festival was introduced in 1981 by the name of "Fraternity of the Song and the River". Soon this event was elaborated, and its scope expanded significantly, and since 1984, there would be a large group of writers, poets and painters from all parts of Yugoslavia to ride a river boat and visit the surrounding villages along the Sava River and the territories that once had belonged to the CC Jasenovac. On that occasion, the camp's past was re-experienced, the poets recited poems on the sufferings and tortures of the inmates, often from a boat that sailed along the river. Entering different villages along the coast, the artists would perform similar performances with frequent involvement of village amateur poets or students. The boat would eventually dock in Jasenovac where the central event was held. In addition to sailing performance, the artists would visit the surrounding towns, schools and libraries. These events would occasionally cause emotional reactions with the audience and the performers as well (NG novine, April 25, 1986, NG novine, April 24, 1987; Poruke, April 15, 1986). The literary prize of the indicative title "The First Yugoslav Revolutionary Poem" was introduced, while the laureate poems were mostly related to camp tortures and deaths. The winner was given the opportunity to publish a collection of poems in the editions of the MS Jasenovac.

10 On the 40th anniversary of the escape of the inmates from the camp and the liberation of the camp, a marathon race was organized that ended under the central monument in the MS Jasenovac. Additionally, each year, a gathering of radio amateur of Yugoslavia was held. They would send information about CC Jasenovac around the world for several days. Poruke, April 20, 1985

There was also a contest for “the best young author”, where students sent their texts, which were then published in the journal “Poruke”.¹¹

Development of commemorative contents left in the shadow several unknowns related to the very occasion of that particular commemorative event, i.e. the organized escape of prisoners from the camp. Namely, when they realized that the Ustasha were preparing to liquidate all the inmates and destroy the camp, a group led by members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia organized an uprising that resulted in a successful escape from the camp at a very high price paid in the great number of victims. It has never been established precisely how many prisoners had survived the escape and what was their further destiny. Their heroic undertaking was often emphasized as an example of resistance in the camp, it symbolized the rebellion of the people who did not allow to be enslaved; sometimes the escape was used to emphasize the difference between the suffering of Jews in Nazi concentration camps and Yugoslav peoples in camps.¹² Bidding for the number of inmates and those who had survived, was finally ended with the publication of the book *The Forgotten* from 2015, where the exact number of survivors from the escape was finally determined and given an overview of their post-war destinies. The memory of most of them remained faithful to the title of this study.¹³

Although the war veterans and survivors from the camp would attend the “Youth Meeting”, according to the Yugoslav calendar of memories, July the 4th, the so-called “day of the Soldier”, was their day, given that the camp prisoners were members of the NOB. According to the protocols of the MS Jasenovac, July the 4th was designated for mass gathering of the survivors and the families of those

11 MS Jasenovac had previously published poetry with a camp theme, often through the magazine *Poruke*, for a review of the issue, see: <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6002> (accessed: November 15, 2018); Archive of the MS Jasenovac, Report on work from 1986.

12 It should be said that the MS Jasenovac printed the forms and informed all those who were in the camp to fill them. This action certainly collected a lot of data, but more systematic research was not carried out. Archive MS Jasenovac, Events Program for 1979; Report on work of the MS Jasenovac for 1983; Cf. *Poruke*, April 15, 1973 and *Poruke* 12.9. 1983.

13 The number of survivors was initially estimated at about forty inmates, but the list gradually expanded later on. In this study, the authors found 102 survivors, plus 2 who fled just before the outbreak of the riot. The value of the study is also that it determined how many inmates survived the last days of the camp by hiding themselves or escaping from the Ustasha in April 1945 when they were forcibly taken away. Motl, Mihovilović 2015, 177.

who lost their lives in the camp. Additionally, Bogdanovic's monument, so eagerly awaited by the families of many victims, was revealed on July the 4th. This way it was attempted to merge the Day of the Soldier with the memory of the victims from Jasenovac. However, the links between this day and the past of Jasenovac were rather weak, so the commemorative celebration of April the 22nd took over, most clearly since 1975. This event represented the main happening in the life of the MS Jasenovac. April the 22nd turned out to be a date that fit far better into the Yugoslav narrative: as a day of resistance and struggle when the members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia led prisoners to escape. With addition of the "Youth Meeting" and organization of the youth work actions, it was easier to merge the difficult past with a bright future and create an emotional connection between the dead and the new generations that ought not to forget (Poruke, July 4, 1970; October 1, 1974; April 19, 1975, April 20, 1985).

The year 1986 marked a decrease in the number of visitors to the memorial, although several steps had been taken to stop this trend. In 1988, a new exhibition was set by Dragoja Lukic and Antun Miletic, in collaboration with the curators of MS Jasenovac. It is conceived as a setting of three exhibiting levels: the upper one, made up for a frieze of 20 large-format photographs, mostly with the scenes of deportations of people from Kozara Mountain to the camp and their sufferings (Mataušić 2008, 20-25); the middle level included original documents, photographs, and explanations; the lower one had objects displayed in the show-cases. The appendix was a video presentation on the informative carousel projector. Compared to the previous exhibition, it was more focused on the camp itself, many of prisoners' personal belongings were displayed, which put emphasis on their individuality, while the modern technologies were used in presentation. However, the rest stayed faithful to old narratives and practices. The past of the camp was related to the NOB and the KPJ, and only the Communists victims were presented with their individual biographies and photographs. The displays and descriptions of the killings of the inmates were thus highlighted so as to leave a shocking impression on the visitor. Particularly moving were the pictures of killed and tortured children (Kojović, 1989, 105-106). The curators of the exhibition were again from outside of the MS Jasenovac, this time from Belgrade, which showed the lack of trust in the employees in the memorial. The old problems were still present, it was difficult to resist the political moment, so the sessions of the commission witnessed controversies about showing the number and identity of the

victims. There were suggestions that the nationality of the victims should be listed, while other suggestions were to write down as victims all nationalities in the country.¹⁴ It was not a coincidence that most photographs on the frieze depict the exiled Serbian population, although there was no explanation on them, and among the exhibited objects there were ten almost identical Jewish marks in the form of metal plates. This indirectly, wanted to point out who were the most numerous victims of the camp, and tried to break up with the narrative about the joint suffering for freedom of all the Yugoslav peoples, while on the other hand a narrative about their number was clearly kept.¹⁵

Besides the new exhibition, a more detailed arrangement of the grave yards and the entire locality in Donja Gradina was carried out. By doing so, the arranged area of the memorial was increased considerably to the other side of the Sava River. Despite all these endeavors, the memorial was visited by about 123,000 people in 1989, which was a drop of more than 50 percent compared to 1985. This rating will continue in the years to come when, due to the social and economic crisis and the breakdown of the country. The activities of the memorial were reduced to a minimum, and not long after the visitors were replaced by army formations, which marks the beginning of a no less interesting stage of this space of memory.¹⁶

As Karge noticed, the problem was not in the way the memory of the victims of the camp was formed. Putting them into the function of the Yugoslav-patriotic narrative was practiced in other countries at the time as well. The problem was that the construction of such a memory was not accompanied by a process of gradual and critical illumination of the past (Karge 2014, 135–136). Instead, the “guardians of memory” resolutely insisted on a narrative that did not allow any

14 The catalog of the exhibition was not available to us. The is unknown whether it was made at all. Archive MS Jasenovac, Minutes of the commission for the creation of a new museum exhibition from 12.11.1987; Commission minutes of 4.12.1987; List of items selected for the new museum exhibition.

15 According to the proposal of the text of the introductory legends at the middle (central) exhibition level, given by the author of the exhibition, it was clearly pointed out that genocide was committed against Serbs, Jews and Roma, and that Serbs were the most numerous victims of the camp. It remains unknown whether these texts had undergone changes since there were controversies at the sessions of the museum committee in charge of overseeing the new exhibition. Archive of MS Jasenovac, Draft of new museum exhibition by Dragoje Lukić; Commission Minutes of 6.3.1988.

16 According to the statistics of the SP Jasenovac, in 1985 there were 280,417 visitors, in 1987, 173,107 visitors. Poruke, 4/17/1988; Archive of the MS Jasenovac, 1989; Mataušić 2003, 145–174.

question. Every attempt to question it was perceived as an attempt to subversion. Any departure from the story of fraternity and unity and the joint heroic struggle of the Partisan with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as their leaders was understood as a blow to the state foundations. Such “petrified memories” could not be maintained for a long time, primarily because the society that must bear and accept such a narrative has changed greatly. The new generations, who had no (or very bad) personal or generational memory of the war, simply did not accept stories without any reservations. Many could not or did not want to be emotionally connected with a narrative filled with blood and horror on all sides, in which the descriptions of the crimes overshadowed many topics related to the camp’s past.

Since neither the ruling elites nor science had filled up the ever more visible holes, the opportunity for filling out the free space and re-entering the public scene was exploited by marginalized groups in Yugoslav society. Thus, the answers to the questions of identity, the number of victims of the war (i.e. the camp) and the responsible for them, were offered more and more by nationalistic currents led by intellectuals, dissidents and various revisionists, but also by the Catholic and the Orthodox Church (Milosavljević 2002; Jović 2017; Popov 1996)

In the 1980s, the process of diversification of the Yugoslav narrative came about, conditioned both by internal changes and external influence through the recognition of the Holocaust as a unique event in human history, and by changing the focus from heroes to individual victims. The internal change of the Yugoslav narrative was reflected, inter alia, in the question of the memorialization of the Jasenovac camp. The reason for this was that the CC Jasenovac had a double link to the general state narrative: the number of Yugoslav victims in the war and the picture of a common (civilian) suffering against the occupiers and quislings, in other word, through the hushed-up topic of the civil war. Hence, the MS Jasenovac SP had been a strictly controlled place of memories or a petrified memory of what it calls Hajke Karge, in ideological and every other sense, since its very beginnings. We saw that the response of the ruling elites to the changes and to the new dynamics in memory, was very awkward and anachronistic. Artistic practices and various other contents were introduced in order to maintain the old narrative in new times. As the collapse of the country approached, the context in which the Jasenovac victims were to be remembered was completely changed. The motive behind remembering “so it would not happen again”, was no longer of educational characters as the new civil conflict was right behind the door. It could be said that

the more the narrative of the past expanded, the less the prospects of a common future were possible. The process of “uncontrolled” diversification of memory did not lead to liberation but to new instrumentalization. Perhaps Tito’s speech in 1952 from Lordan Zafranovic’s movie could not serve anymore as a kind of catharsis thirty years later. The answer lies within this fact that there was no interest to respond to modern challenges differently but with that very same, simple and lazy parole “And after Tito - Tito”. As if they had adopted Fukuyama’s thesis on the end of history a priori. The anachronistic guardians of the Yugoslav memory were defeated by an opponent they knew so well, whom they had already defeated well before the end of history.

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Memorijal pod nadzorom: Jasenovac

Rad nastoji da prikaže kakvo je sećanje na koncentracioni logor Jasenovac negovano u SFR Jugoslaviji. Fokus je stavljen na osamdesete godine XX veka, kada jugoslovenski narativ dolazi do iskušenja i na to kako se njegovo postepeno razbijanje reflektovalo na sećanje o jasenovačkom logoru. Pregledom načina rada i memorijalnih praksi koje su primenjivane u spomen-području Jasenovac, nastoji se ukazati na vrlo bliske veze jasenovačke teme i centralnih državnih narativa. Analiziraju se muzejske postavke, muzejski dokumentarni filmovi, komemorativne svečanosti, te naučni skupovi održani u Jasenovcu. Prikazuje se u kojoj meri je memorijal bio pod nadzorom vlasti i koja mu je funkcija bila namenjena u jugoslovenskom društvu.

Ključne reči: spomen područje Jasenovac, koncentracioni logor Jasenovac, kultura sećanja, raspad Jugoslavije.

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THE STRANGE ABSENCE OF WARTIME CROATIA FROM STUDIES OF ARYANIZATION: Explaining a Historiographical Anomaly*

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This article addresses the state of historiography on aryanization in the wartime Independent State of Croatia. Through an analysis of past and current scholarship it aims better to understand why the case of Croatia has so often been absent in comparative studies of aryanization in occupied Europe. The article first examines recent scholarship on aryanization in two other South-Eastern States (Bulgaria and Romania) whose socio-economic composition and experience of aryanization closely matches that of Croatia before considering the research on aryanization in Croatia since 1945. Then, drawing on a range of primary archival and printed sources, it provides an outline of the key characteristics of aryanization in Croatia. Finally, it suggests where research on aryanization could go in the future to ensure wartime Croatia becomes an integral part of wider discussions on the economics of the Holocaust in occupied Europe.

Key words: Aryanization; the Holocaust; Ustasha regime; Independent State of Croatia; history of the everyday; Saul Friedländer; economic terror

* I am grateful to Aleksandar Stojanović for sharing secondary sources with me about the Holocaust in occupied Serbia. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from German, French and Serbo-Croatian are my own.

ON 9 JUNE 1941, ANTUN PRPIĆ, A 45-YEAR OLD husband and father living in Karlovac, wrote to the local Croatian Ustasha center (Hrvatski ustaški stan u Karlovcu – HUSK) seeking employment. In his letter, he explained that in the years before the “revolution” he had been employed in the Yugoslav forestry industry in nearby Vojnić until being dismissed at the end of 1938. He had a wife and son of twelve years and no source of income. As he had not had a job for nearly three years “life has been very difficult and until now I have not had any kind of hope of service so I am glad that now the time has come of all those honorable, respectable and spirited Croats.” He added that throughout his period of state employment, he had not been free to make his national feelings clear, but instead “spiritually and patiently” waited until the right situation presented itself. As a Croat, he went on, he had never deviated from the “correct” path and, as a result, always “suffered,” being frequently exploited and given a smaller amount of pay and more arduous employment than many others in a comparable position. He was therefore asking for employment “of any kind” as a clerk in an office, regional treasury, the local stock exchange, the nearby franchise of the Našička factory or “something similar”. He was sure that given everything he had been through, the HUSK would accommodate his request. The same day, he wrote another letter, this time to the city authorities. While in his first petition, he had stressed his persecution by the Yugoslav state as a reason why he was a strong candidate for employment, in this second letter, he presented a strictly labor-force rationale: “Seeing as there will be many employees who have already been dismissed from various city enterprises I hope that these enterprises will need new employees. On this basis I am asking you to offer me the opportunity to earn my everyday bread and not to be supported by my wife and the social section of the city authority...I should mention that I am very capable of administrative work and accountancy and have no criminal record.”¹ The reply from the city authorities which was also sent on behalf of the HUSK was rapid. “In answer to your petition of 9 June 1941 in which you ask for employment with this regional office, we wish to inform you

1 Antun Prpić to the HUSK and city authorities in Karlovac, 9 June 1941: Državni arhiv u Karlovcu, Gradsko poglavarstvo Karlovca, Pismo Antuna Prpića, 1941, spisi, 16-18/21, 13-500/unnumbered.

that at present there is no need for new employees and consequently we cannot fulfill your request.”² Antun Prpić’s search for work continued.

Who were these people to whom Prpić referred in his second petition and why had they been dismissed? While in one sense his petition seems an ordinary request for work at a time of economic scarcity, in his letter this middle-aged father of one was describing an economic process which was then taking place throughout occupied Europe: aryanization. In Holocaust literature the term “aryanization” is usually taken to mean the confiscation of Jewish businesses, property and assets and the removal of Jewish employees from the workforce, a preparatory step on the road to their physical extermination. In wartime Croatia, however, this process was also implemented against two other categories of “undesired elements”: the Serbs and Roma. As Antun Prpić’s letter shows it was a process which grew to involve not only institutions such as trade unions and workers’ co-operatives but a large number of ordinary Croats too who hoped to benefit in some way whether through the purchase of confiscated businesses, assets and property or gaining a new job. Aryanization changed the entire pattern of everyday life in the Independent State of Croatia, stimulating consumer demand and the desire for consumer goods, feeding aspirations of social mobility and prosperity and encouraging an atmosphere of terror and denunciation. In short, aryanization grew to influence almost every feature of economic and social life, becoming a constituent part of a wider revolutionary remaking of society and the incarnation of a purified, autarchic “national community” [narodna zajednica].

However, despite the centrality of aryanization to everyday life and terror in the Ustasha state and thus to an understanding of the social history of wartime Croatia, surprisingly little has been written on the subject by Croatian scholars. There are a number of reasons for this. In the Yugoslav context, the lack of “from below” approaches reflects the fact that social history, except that which idealized the role of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia or the resistance of workers, was generally overlooked in the historiography of wartime and occupation in favor of grand narratives. In the context of this framework, looking at what was happening in factories and businesses at the micro level and the complex responses of workers, employees and consumers to aryanization would have challenged the existing historiographical paradigm. There was another equally important political factor

2 Karlovac city authorities to Prpić, 3 July 1941: DAKA, GPK, Pismo Antuna Prpića, 1941, spisi, 16-18/21, 13-500/112.

influencing the historiography of the Holocaust, which has only recently begun to be explored by historians. While post-war Yugoslavia represented a dramatic break with the policies of the fascist wartime Croatian state, in the economic sphere there were important continuities between early socialist Yugoslavia and wartime Croatia. This was especially the case in relation to campaigns of economic purging and show trials against businessmen and traders accused of collaboration with the occupiers or various forms of “economic corruption.” Like the Ustasha state at the height of the aryanization process, economic life in early post-war Yugoslavia was characterized by a succession of trials against defendants accused of financial corruption, among which, as in the Na-ma department store trial of the late 1940s, were a number of Jewish traders. In the late 1940s it was also not uncommon for Jewish Holocaust survivors, for example, applying for the return of their aryanized business to find themselves accused by the people’s court of collaboration with the occupier for “allowing” their businesses to be handed over to the Ustasha authorities and to continue working in them afterwards. Rather than acknowledge that these actions reflected a desperate attempt to buy time for themselves and their families in a time of terror, the courts instead often ruled that the fact they had survived the Holocaust was proof of their guilt. Sometimes those who gave evidence against them were the same local Ustasha leaders who had ordered their deportations before defecting to the Partisan resistance movement.³ By the end of the 1940s, in any case, most private enterprises had been compulsorily purchased by the state and nationalized which, though the ideological context was very different, also shared similarities with aryanization in wartime Croatia. (Mihal-Brandl 2012, 103–127) All of these factors meant that studying aryanization in any kind of systemic way was somewhat problematic.⁴

That does not mean Yugoslav scholars did not address aspects of aryanization or use social history methods. One of the earliest scholarly studies about the terror of the Ustasha regime was Andrija-Ljubomir Lisac’s 1956 paper about the mass deportations of Serbs to Serbia by the State Directorate for Regeneration [Državno ravnateljstvo za ponovu – DRP]. In his analysis of this state-wide

3 For a personal reflection on this dynamic by one Yugoslav Holocaust survivor see, for example: Milo 2010, 252–353.

4 The standard Yugoslav-era works on the Independent State of Croatia are: Jelić-Butić 1978; Krizman 1980. While both are wide-ranging studies neither discusses aryanization in any depth.

initiative which interacted closely with aryanization though was not part of it Lisac made effective use of social history methodologies (Andrija-Ljubomir Lisac 1956, 125–45).⁵ In contrast to aryanization, the history of the mass deportations was a politically less problematic area to study since most Serbs had not suffered persecution at the hands of the post-war communist authorities and in fact formed the dominant cohort within it. At the same time, the deportations were a relatively less complex phenomenon than aryanization, of shorter duration and a top-down phenomenon, with negligible popular participation or support from ordinary Croats, sometimes being met by open opposition. The deportations were also more visible and hence more amenable to an oral history approach, which was the defining historiographical approach for much of the early post-war era. Most importantly, unlike many of the victims of aryanization who had been liquidated or disappeared into new identities, many more victims of deportation had survived to relate their experiences. What held true in 1956 remains the case for contemporary studies of social history in the Independent State of Croatia: in comparison to the absence of history from below about aryanization in wartime Croatia, there is an increasing socially-informed literature by younger Croat historians on the forced migrations, even if they are not yet using fully-realized social history and ethnographic methodologies.⁶

The decades after the fall of the Yugoslav state should have represented a major advance in the historiography about everyday life in the Independent State of Croatia and the application of social history and “from below” approaches. However, while Croatian historiography was freed from the ideological constraints of the past, socialist orthodoxies were replaced by nationalist ones and this had a direct influence on how historians in Croatia dealt with the legacy of the Ustasha movement. Many nationalist, often formerly socialist, historians sought to rehabilitate the Ustasha movement and the wartime state by concentrating on the “positive”

5 The program of deportation of more than 100,000 Serbs from Croatia to Serbia while not directly part of aryanization was closely related to it. Serbs who were selected for deportation to Serbia were only allowed to take 50kg worth of goods with them, the rest, including property and assets, being nationalized, redistributed or auctioned. Moreover, a significant number of Serbs who had been dismissed from their workplaces or had seen their businesses confiscated applied to immigrate to Serbia since they had no means of survival in Croatia.

6 See, for example: Škiljan 2014; Škiljan 2012, 1–34; Škiljan 2012, 149–69; Karakaš-Obradov 2011, 801–26.

aspects of fascist rule such as its cultural policies and the role of the artist in the state.⁷ This involved constructing a model, which artificially separated the terror of the Ustasha regime from the “culture” of the Croatian wartime state.⁸ While its leading proponents such as Dubravko Jelčić defended it as a new “de-ideologized” approach to writing the history of the Ustasha regime, to many others it no doubt recalled historian Geoff Eley’s withering riposte to Sheila Fitzpatrick’s revisionist studies of Stalinism: “history with the politics taken out.” (Eley 1986, 357–73)⁹

As a 2000 article about social life under Ustasha rule in Sisak by Hrvoje Klasić showed, this de-ideologised approach to the Independent State of Croatia also became an increasingly attractive model for young non-nationalist scholars who were interested in looking at the history of the everyday in the context of the short-lived fascist period in Croatia (Klasić 2000, 527–45). Since this new historiographical paradigm was characterized by the use of everyday and social history methodologies as well as the beginnings of the application of Foucault’s subjectivity theories, it might have been expected that, in time, these approaches would have also been applied to other aspects of Ustasha rule, most obviously state terror and aryanization. However, while social history and subjectivity seemed to provide a methodological answer for nationalist historians in Croatia who argued that the Communist Party had demonized the Ustasha movement for ideological reasons, a “from below” approach to the everyday terror of the Ustasha movement also threatened to undermine the narrative nationalist historians had constructed. If one of the bases of post-1990 nationalist historiography was that the crimes of the Ustasha regime had to be separated from the wartime state and that the state was the expression of popular support from ordinary Croats, another closely-related argument was that those crimes were not premeditated but rather a direct (over) reaction to violent Serb resistance, in particular, to the new state. However, the archival collections filled with the letters of Serb, Jewish and Roma supplicants showed, alongside social support for the Ustasha movement from ordinary Croats

7 These kinds of histories were especially common in the early 1990s with a subtext aiming at the rehabilitation of NDH-era poets, singers, writers and intellectuals. See, for example, Donat 1995, 6–22; Donat 1998; Mihanović 1990, 145–51.

8 The programmatic manifesto for this model was set out by Dubravko Jelčić in Jelčić 1995, 524.

9 By contrast, recent cultural and intellectual histories have more closely tied ideology and terror to culture but have retained the grand narrative approach – for example, Rafaelić 2013

(as well as high levels of resistance), acceptance of and even support for the new state among the Serb intelligentsia and affluent Jews and Roma, the first targets of Ustasha terror.¹⁰ In other words, the bottom-up model which nationalist historians were using in the case of culture politics to rehabilitate the wartime state also had the potential to return the same state back to its original status as a genocidal entity in the case of economic terror.¹¹ Thus, where the less positive side of the wartime Croatian state was concerned, the same top-down historiographical orthodoxy, which had prevailed in socialist Yugoslavia, remained dominant, partly as a distancing technique.

For much the same reason, a newer cohort of Holocaust revisionists have broadly taken the same approach, despite their assertions to the contrary.¹² For example, in the foreword to their highly-revisionist study of Jasenovac, *Jasenovački logori*, the authors stated at the outset that they aimed to challenge and deconstruct the “myth” of the genocidal nature of the Ustasha camp by building up a “from below” picture of everyday life in the camp through the analysis of camp records, the diaries of inmates and records of camp activities among other sources (Vukić and Razum 2015, 8.). Yet, the majority of the study makes only passing references to these sources and provides little evidence of the supposed “routine” nature of the camp. Moreover, despite the mimicking of the language commonly used by social and cultural historians it is clear that the authors have little idea in how to assess “from below” evidence. For example, while it is interesting to know that camp guards played football with inmates or that they organized performances

10 Among the most egregious scholarly examples are: Krišto 2001; Valentić 2000, 317–334.

11 There have been a few attempts to describe everyday life of wartime Croatia, but they have generally been non-academic photographic collections and generally unsuccessful, overemphasizing normalcy (and beneficiaries) over state terror (and victims). See *Život u NDH: slike života, slike smrti* 2010 for one example. Sharp criticisms of this book include Pupovac 2010; Goldstein 2010.

12 In historiography “revisionism” has a double meaning. James M. McPherson argues that revisionism – the challenging of assumptions and “known” facts when new evidence emerges, new questions are asked or perspectives are gained – is the “lifeblood of historical scholarship.” However, revisionism, especially in relation with the Holocaust, also means denial and an attempt to rewrite the past. This is the meaning I apply here, despite the unconvincing claim of one leading young revisionist of wartime Croatia that she is a revisionist in the McPherson sense of the word. See Hrvoje Prnjak, “Osobno mi ne smeta kad mi nazivaju revizionistom. To znači da dobro radim svoj posao,” *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 30 April 2016. Interview with Blanka Matković.

of Branslav Nušić's plays, this information is meaningless unless we know how often these activities took place, with whom and under what circumstances. Given that the book was written for ideological rather than scholarly reasons, these questions are never answered. Since the authors don't understand and have no interest in interdisciplinary or comparative frameworks, they are seemingly unaware that many Nazi death camps, in addition to daily liquidations of Jews, Roma and "undesirables," organized musical, theatrical and entertainment events at which inmates were forced to perform for SS officers, the most infamous example being the Dachau orchestra.¹³ In fact, in spite of the monograph's claims to methodological innovation, in terms of primary sources it relies, as many scholars of Ustasha terror have, on official correspondence from state ministries, though often taken out of context. The other main source of primary evidence is decontextualized passages from unverified assertions in camp memoirs written sometime after the event. This all means that the reader learnt gains little reliable information about the everyday life of men, women and children in the camp. Even the basic arguments in the book are not original, being a reworking of claims made by an earlier generation of revisionists.¹⁴ Given that for most of the period since 1990, serious scholars of wartime Croatia have retained the grand narrative model for discussing Ustasha terror, it is sobering to think that until recently the only cohort of historians to attempt to apply every day and social history methodologies to the study of Ustasha terror – of which aryanisation was a constituent part – have been those who insisted it had never existed.

In view of the increasing body of scholarship about aryanization in occupied Europe and the lack of a similar research base on wartime Croatia now would seem like an opportune moment to suggest how research in this area might develop. This article therefore proposes to do three things: first, it discusses some of the most important recent studies on aryanization in South-Eastern Europe and beyond, considering what historians of wartime Croatia can learn from them and how literature on aryanization in Croatia fits into the wider European context; second, it reviews the current state of literature on the case study of Croatia; and third, it will set out what an everyday historiography of aryanization in Croatia might look like. This article argues that the Croatian case potentially has much to offer in providing

¹³ See, for example, most recently: Timpe 2017, 143–145.

90 | ¹⁴ Cf with the arguments in Jurčević 1998.

a full-system view of aryanization in occupied Europe. Although in many respects aryanization in the Independent State of Croatia followed a trajectory common to many occupied states in Hitler's new Europe with respect to the confiscation of Jewish and Roma property and assets and the exclusion of Jews and Roma from the national economy, the history of aryanization in Croatia was atypical in a number of ways. First, unlike in most other occupied states, Jews were not the only group to be targeted for economic destruction. Under the Ustasha regime, alongside the Holocaust and Porrajmos the period between 1941 and 1945 also witnessed a parallel genocide against Croatia's substantial Serb minority who, with the Jews and Roma, were the primary targets of the state's aryanization program. Second, the radical, rapid and violent nature of aryanization in the Independent State of Croatia also makes it unique to a certain extent. In their vision of a nationally-autarchic economy purified of the involvement of "undesired elements," the wartime state followed closely the legislative framework the Third Reich had developed since 1933. However, what had taken Nazi Germany nearly ten years to achieve the Ustasha regime aimed to achieve in a number of months. Moreover, given the violent subculture of the pre-war Ustasha movement, its strongly working-class and largely semi-educated base of support, especially among those who formed its hardline elite cohort, systematic terror was interwoven into the system of aryanisation. Aryanisation became an integral part of mass terror. In the case of the Serb minority who were already being massacred in villages and small towns throughout the new state by Ustasha militias, incarcerated in makeshift concentration camps such as Jadovno or Danica or deported to "resettlement camps" en route to Serbia, aryanization represented less a preliminary step on the road to eradication than an element in a wider program of genocide specifically targeting the Serb urban elite.

Finally, the survival of extensive documentation on aryanization applied to a comparative study of the Croatian case study raises the possibility of creating a genuinely integrated history of the Holocaust as envisaged by historians such as Raul Hilberg and Saul Friedländer, considering the interaction between bystanders, beneficiaries, perpetrators and victims. In his 1993 study of these different groups, Hilberg explained that his study aimed to provide "capsule portraits of people, known and unknown who were once a part of this history" and explore the ambiguous messy realities behind the seemingly discrete categories such as "bystanders" and "perpetrators." For example, Hilberg argued that the perpetrators were aware of the consequences of what they were doing and their function in the

process, but because their work was “diffused in a widespread bureaucracy” each person could feel that their contribution was a small part of a wider undertaking and so didn’t feel personally guilty. Likewise, bystanders, although they did not want to become directly involved in the persecutions, also did not want to invoke the ire of the perpetrators and consequently became not just beneficiaries but also perpetrators since they “took advantage of Jewish misfortunes and seized a profit” even if others intervened on behalf of the victims (Hilberg 1993, ix-xii). For his part, in his 2007 study, Friedländer argued for an integrated history combining the subjectivity of victims, perpetrators and bystanders to the Holocaust as a means of understanding the complexity of people in all these groups. This was especially important in view of Jewish victims around whom a myth had developed which had sentimentalized or homogenized their experience. For Friedländer, an integrated history of the Holocaust meant incorporating the history of the Third Reich and the Jewish experience into the same historical discourse, with historians bringing an equal skepticism to Jewish documents as Nazi ones (Friedländer 2007, 7–27).

In his centerpiece essay, Friedländer considered the photograph of a young Jewish-Dutch medical student David Moffie, taken on the day of his graduation from the University of Amsterdam on 18 September 1942, surrounded by family and friends, his doctoral supervisor and the dean of the faculty. He asked how it was possible for Moffie, in black dinner jacket, white tie and Jewish star on his lapel, to graduate on the same day Jewish students were officially shut out of university, especially as shortly afterwards he was deported to Auschwitz. The answer, he explained, was that the university authorities had not imposed the ban in the way the Nazi occupation authorities had intended, meaning that Moffie was the final Jewish student to graduate on the last official day of the academic year for 1941–2. Since the rounding up of Jews was already taking place in Amsterdam, he could not have attended his ceremony unless he had been able to secure one of the exception certificates supplied by the occupation authorities to the Jewish Council. Friedländer argued that the photograph expressed the interaction between “German ideological hallucinations and sophisticated administrative measures, Dutch institutions and individual decisions, Jewish institutions and in the middle, above all, the fate of an individual Jew. Translated into words, told in context and interpreted in its different layers of meaning, the photo should be looked on as a metonymic representation of a history with many facets – as the connecting factor of an integrated history of the Holocaust.” Friedländer argued that such a history of

the Holocaust was necessary so as not to reduce the Holocaust simply to German decisions and measures; it also needed to look at the behaviour of the authorities, institutions and specific social groups in the occupied states and satellite states. It was also clear, he added, that Jewish reactions and perceptions were an inseparable component of that history. It was only thus possible to improve an understanding of events if one perceived the size, complexity and interconnections of the components of this history. Introducing individual voices from below, he continued, helped broaden the perspective, enabling the historian to better understand what people knew, thought, advocated and criticized. For the same reason, the history of the extermination of the Jews could no longer be restricted simply to post-war testimonies, memoirs and interviews but also had to make use of the “extraordinarily large number of diaries and letters which were written at the time the events were happening” and had been found in the immediate post-war period. While, like all sources, they should be read with caution, as a record of what it meant to be Jewish during the Holocaust the diaries of ordinary Jewish citizens and children were “irreplaceable,” a silent chronicle of the initiatives and everyday brutality of the perpetrators, the reaction of bystanders and the life and extermination of the Jewish community (Friedländer 2007, 7–27).

Similarly, as this article argues, an integrated history of the Holocaust and aryanization in wartime Croatia, looking at all those who were affected by these processes, would allow historians to achieve a deeper more complex understanding of the driving forces behind aryanization and what it aimed to achieve. If, as this article aims to show, aryanization had two basic aims in the economic destruction of the Serb, Jewish and Roma elite in preparation for their physical elimination, on the one hand, and social mobility and economic advancement for ordinary Croats on the other, in addition to the construction of an autarchic nationally-purified economy, then equally bringing to life the subjectivity of victims, beneficiaries, perpetrators and bystanders not only allows us to recover the voices of those individuals who have for so long been excluded from the history of the Holocaust in Croatia through their letters, diaries, petitions and correspondence but helps to reconstruct a picture of the Holocaust in real time. As importantly, it provides a challenge to what we think we know about the dynamics of occupation and the everyday economics of the Holocaust in Europe, in turn raising the possibility that perhaps the most interesting and revealing case study of aryanization in the European marketplace has yet to be written.

1. NATIONAL ROADS TO “ARYANIZATION” IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

If there is much that Holocaust historians working on the history of aryanization can learn from the case study of Croatia, then equally historians of the Independent State of Croatia can gain much from a close reading of aryanization in other European states. This is especially true perhaps of South-Eastern states such as Bulgaria and Romania in terms of both the similarities they shared with wartime Croatia and their fundamental differences. Like Croatia and many other European states under occupation, Romania and Bulgaria pursued their own national roads to aryanization which drew heavily on the legislation of Nazi Germany but combined this with national traditions and models. This is indicated by the names they gave to the confiscation of Jewish assets and the economic exclusion of the Jews: “Romanization” and “Bulgarianization.”¹⁵ Ion Antonescu’s Romania and wartime Bulgaria were differentiated from Croatia by the fact that while they were allied to the Third Reich neither was occupied by the German army and nor were they satellite states in the way that, say, Slovakia was. In both states, too, Jews who resided in the “old” core parts of Bulgaria and Romania were not subject to as much persecution as those in the newly-acquired territories. This was not the case in Croatia where, with the exception of the Adriatic Coast, under Italian occupation, the fate of the Jews did not significantly differ. That said, in their aryanization policies both states shared commonalities with Croatia. These included popular participation in confiscations; the creation of a category of “economically-useful” Jews, dictated by economic need; and, paradoxically, a commitment to implement economic cleansing even when it was detrimental to the economy. In the Romanian case, at least, as Stefan Cristian Ionescu writes, aryanization, as it was in Croatia, was “an ideologically-driven social engineering policy designed to build and empower a self-sufficient, productive and efficient ethnic-Romanian bourgeoisie as a core element of a developed nation-state.” Meanwhile, the exclusion of Jews from private employment combined with the hiring of Romanian replacements aimed “to create a skilled cadre of dedicated industrial and commercial specialists to strengthen the nation’s labour potential.” (Ionescu 2015, 4–6.)

15 Drago Roksandić has suggested substituting “Croatianization” in place of aryanization. But the wartime Croatian state’s economic and planning agencies used the terms “aryanization” or “nationalization,” not “Croatianization.”

Similar to wartime Croatia, in Romania and Bulgaria, aryanization encompassed not only the confiscation and nationalization of Jewish businesses and appointment of commissioners, but also the appropriation of Jewish assets and property and removal of Jews from the workforce. Furthermore, in both states, the mass confiscation of assets and their reselling on the market had immediate economic impacts which worked in partnership with the wartime economy, rationing and price controls. These impacts included a sharp and unsustainable rise in consumer demand; sharp fluctuations in prices; and, over time, the emergence of a collective mindset that private property had no meaning on the one hand and a widespread acceptance of collectivist and interventionist economic principles on the other. The scholars of the most comprehensive studies of aryanization in Bulgaria and Romania, Roumen Avramov and Stefan Cristian Ionescu, argue that the removal of Jews from the national economy had immediate negative impacts at the micro as well as macro level in the loss of expertise, knowledge and productivity since often there was no one suitable to replace dismissed Jewish workers. One of the most useful parts of both studies is their discussion of the complicated and ambiguous attitude of Romanian and Bulgarian civilians towards the aryanization process. While proponents of aryanization tended to emphasize its social benefits in the construction of a more economically “just” society and trade unions used the social leveling produced by aryanization as a means of securing better conditions and wages for their members, the reactions of workers, peasants and the middle-classes could be ambivalent. Their reactions ranged from involvement in pilfering, enthusiastic buying on the open market or at auction and denunciations against Jewish colleagues to open opposition, attempts to intercede on behalf of Jewish friends, co-workers and neighbors or clandestine protection.

Avramov’s study on Bulgaria sets out the high level of conflict, incompetence, disagreement and corruption which existed in the agencies and ministries implementing aryanization and the broad social backgrounds of those who wrote to these same agencies asking for confiscated goods or employment, including, Avramov notes, prominent politicians and clergy later recognized for speaking out on behalf of the Jews. He argues that these kinds of petitions illustrated how the economic policies of the Bulgarian state worked to normalize everyday anti-Semitism. “The trivial economic acts which created a context in which overstepping the moral line ceased to be an event: the delays, the obligatory back and forth with the Commissariat, the countless public advertisements in the newspapers,

the appetizing possibilities at hand, gave confiscation its everyday dimension.” The atmosphere of speculation, which this rationalization of confiscation gave birth to, he concludes, “corrupted values and economic systems.” (Avramov 2014, 64–74; Avramov 2012) In contrast, Ionescu’s book, while it explores the response of the general public to Romanianization and the dynamics, conflicts and disagreements of the agencies leading the process, is more concerned with how Jews negotiated and resisted Romania’s aryanization laws through a variety of legal challenges as well as by exploiting networks of patronage, corruption and influence. In this sense, both Avramov and Ionescu’s studies take seriously the integrated approach advocated by Friedländer and Hilberg to aryanization though Avramov’s is generally more concerned with macro aspects and the perpetrators and Ionescu with micro elements and the victims. Consequently, neither book is an entirely complete integrated history of the economics of the Holocaust.

As well as drawing on lessons from states where aryanization followed a similar course, there is arguably much that can be learnt from comparable states with dissimilar trajectories. Occupied Serbia, for example, where aryanization was directly administered by the Nazi military authorities, potentially provides a useful comparison in exploring how experiences of aryanization among victims, interest groups and general public might have differed in occupied Europe according to the nature of that occupation. While in the three decades since the publication of Karl-Heinz Schlarp’s pioneering monograph about the economy of occupation in Serbia there have been no comprehensive studies of aryanization (Schlarp Steiner 1986), in recent years Serbian scholars, in particular, have increasingly paid attention to the subject.¹⁶ Furthermore, there is a growing literature on the Holocaust and everyday life under the Nazi occupation and collaborationist administration of Milan Nedic, much of which also considers the economic destruction of the Jews and Roma.¹⁷

Outside of South-Eastern Europe, there has long been a rich historiography on aryanisation in wartime Europe providing insight into how ordinary people negotiated it. These range from studies looking at the confiscation of Jewish

¹⁶ See, for example, Aleksić V. 2015, 21–38; Aleksić V. 2014, 109–121; Aleksić B. 2015, 51–64.

¹⁷ See, for example, Ristović 2010, 1–31; Koljanin 2011, 143–56; Zec 2016, 84–107. The standard non-Serbian works on the subject are: Browning 1985; Manoschek 1993. For a useful review of recent scholarship about the Holocaust in Serbia, see Stojanović 2017, 151–164.

property and assets in Vichy France, Nazi Germany and Axis Hungary to confiscations across Europe using a comparative framework. While disappointingly little of it meaningfully places Croatia within its framework, much of it offers new ideas and research agendas which could be applied to the Croatian case.¹⁸ A useful starting point is Tatjana Tönsmeier's 2007 essay about aryanization in Eastern and Central European states allied to Nazi Germany. Tönsmeier concentrates on the confiscation and nationalization programmes in Slovakia, Romania and Hungary because, as she concedes, there is far more accessible information about them. Despite the relatively greater amount of information available about aryanization in these states, Tönsmeier makes the point that "[w]e still know very few details of the expropriation process and almost nothing about the differences between the capital cities and the regions, about the strategies used by Jewish owners to try to save their property and about the social impact of the expropriations." That said, her essay provides important insights into the process of aryanization in the region which are relevant to any discussion of the economics of the Holocaust in Croatia. Like many recent studies of aryanization, she argues that popular support among non-Jewish populations was crucial for the success of attempts aiming at the dispossession, if not eradication, of the Jews, with social resentment remaining an important factor even after aryanization. At the same time, as Tönsmeier points out, aryanization, while it was driven by anti-Semitism and aimed to "solve" the Jewish "problem," also had practical function in buying support among sympathizers and guaranteeing social peace by, for example, handing over expropriated apartments to homeless workers and state officials, confiscated land to returning combatant soldiers and clothes and shoes to the rural poor. This pattern which was established first in Hungary was subsequently followed in Slovakia and Romania. Tönsmeier also sets out the active role which ordinary Hungarians, Slovaks and Romanians took in aryanization. For example, in western Hungary as late as June 1944, hundreds applied to take on the leases of confiscated Jewish shops or in Transylvania to take over expropriated Jewish businesses. As Tönsmeier notes, even after the introduction of socialism this conception of the Holocaust as a form of social justice remained unchallenged for some time (Tönsmeier 2007, 68–82). This line of reasoning is taken a step further by Götz Aly and Christian Gerlach in their study of the destruction of the Jews in Hungary. Gerlach and Aly demonstrate

18 See, for example, Deans 2010; Aly 2008; Bajohr 2002; Dreyfus 2003; Fogg 2008; Vagi and Kádár 2004a; Vagi and Kádár 2004b.

how the Hungarian state aimed to gain popular support for aryanization and the Holocaust more generally by presenting it to ordinary Hungarians as a form of “redistributive” economics. They also argue that it was largely understood as such by Hungarian citizens themselves, indicating that this process was driven in part by pressure from economically hard-pressed citizens and workers from below as well as from above by the state in an unsuccessful attempt to stabilize the economy and inflation (Gerlach and Aly 2002).

Similarly relevant to the Croatian case and a “from below” approach is Christian Gerlach’s 2016 study of the extermination of the European Jews which provides convincing evidence about the active role of ordinary citizens in the Holocaust. He argues, for example, that one of the driving forces of the expulsion of Jews in occupied Europe from their apartments and properties was the lack of living space among nominally “Aryan” populations who not infrequently moved into the empty properties of Jews. In addition, he argues that the removal of Jews from the workplace was a means of freeing up work places for non-Jews and native workers, facilitating the demand for social mobility. Furthermore, the expropriation of Jewish possessions intended to reduce inflation even if, as he also points out, it actually led to hyperinflation. This indicates that “the organized looting of Jewish property was, for many, mitigation against the war-related *reduction* in living standards rather than a means of *raising* living standards.” While the persecution of the Jews, including their economic destruction, was ultimately incredibly expensive for the Reich and the occupied territories, “the public and private desire for this property did help propel the persecution and extermination of Jews.” While the stimulating questions raised by Gerlach are highly relevant to wartime Croatia, they remain almost entirely unexplored arguments in search of their historian (Gerlach 2016, 265–70, 281–283, 336–68).

2. ELITE-LED ARYANIZATION IN CROATIA AND THE LIMITS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

Although much has changed in the past twenty years in the historiography of the Ustasha regime and the Independent State of Croatia, since the 1990s scholarship on aryanization and the economics of the Holocaust has been minimal. The single study most relevant to the subject is Holm Sundhaussen’s 1983 study, *Wirtsgeschichte Kroatiens im nationalsozialistischen Grossraum* [An

Economic History of Croatia in the National Socialist Empire]. In his wide-ranging study of the economic system established by the German occupation administration in Croatia he provided a detailed, statistically-driven picture of how the wartime economy worked under German exploitation and the impact of economic policy, including aryanization, on the wider everyday economy. Sundhaussen's study wasn't specifically about aryanization and while it covered many aspects of economic life from macroeconomics and industrial production to the cost of living crisis, it drew heavily on the work of German economic experts in Croatia and was dictated by an elite-led perspective. Likewise, although the study explored the impact on the everyday activities of ordinary people in the marketplace as a result of the imposition of a corporate economy, from sharply rising prices and increases in the cost of living to endemic corruption and the culture of bribery, it did not engage with the perspectives of ordinary Croats (Sundhaussen 1983). A newer generation of western scholars, by contrast, have begun to analyze the wartime Croatian economy with a more specific focus on aryanization and the history of the everyday. Using "from below" and microhistorical methodologies, recent studies have considered the confiscation of Serbian and Jewish property and assets and the relationship between bureaucrats and the victims in a more complex manner as well as the economic impacts of the aryanization campaign. One example of this "new turn" is Dallas Michelbacher's article applying utility theory to the confiscation of Jewish businesses and mass dismissal of Jewish workers in Sarajevo to provide a clearer picture of why Ustasha commissioners appointed to Jewish businesses in the city intervened for some Jewish employees and not for others. In his study, which also examines the responses of Croat and Muslim workers and members of the public to the forced removal of Jews from the workplace, Michelbacher argues that while basic humane instincts played a role in dictating the actions taken by commissioners and workers on behalf of Jewish employees, decisions were often dictated by business needs. Moreover, his analysis of the applications some Sarajevans sent for positions as commissioners to Serb and Jewish businesses underlines the role which demand for social mobility, prestigious and profitable employment and consumer goods played in aryanization, thereby deconstructing the Yugoslav historiographical narrative which claimed massive popular resistance to Ustasha rule (Michelbacher 2015, 43–61).

Recent micro studies about aryanization in Croatia have similarly sought to provide a "from below" perspective on how workers interacted with the victims

of persecution, sometimes intervening for them but at other times driving the workplace purges through written denunciations. Increasing attention is also being paid to the subjectivity of the victims of aryanization and the various linguistic devices they employed in their petitions to the DRP, the Directorate of Ustasha police or other agencies to claim membership of the “national community” and renounce their Serb, Jewish or Roma identities (Yeomans 2017a, 284–96; Yeomans 2017b, 21–39; Yeomans 2018, 1–17). The approach taken by these scholars contrasts sharply with the approach of by Esther Gitman in her study of the attempts to rescue Jews in the Independent State of Croatia by the Catholic Church and ordinary Croat citizens (Gitman 2011). While not specifically about aryanization, a chapter of her book is dedicated to the subject. There is no doubt that Gitman’s study is useful in establishing that many workers, employees and directors showed enormous courage in intervening for Jewish colleagues. However, the study is too one-sided and lacking in nuance to provide a convincing or reliable picture of the reactions of Croatian society to the persecutions of the Jews. As a number of critics have pointed out, in constructing her argument that Croat workers and citizens were massively involved in the saving of Jews during the Second World War, Gitman’s study only cites the “positive story” of Croat workers as active agents of history in the Holocaust and does not acknowledge, far less explore, the role that some workers and ordinary Croats played either as inadvertent or intentional cogs in the machinery of destruction. Nor does her study address the fate of the Serbs and Roma in the context of the campaigns of confiscation, appropriation and mass workplace dismissals. It is fair to say that even ten years previously, Gitman’s superficial analysis of petitions written by ordinary workers on behalf of Jewish colleagues, friends and neighbours would have seemed like a major advance, despite its severe limitations. Yet, considered in the context of recent studies by western Holocaust scholars, where the history of the everyday and interdisciplinary approaches are increasingly the norm, the entire enterprise seems both empirically and methodologically outdated.¹⁹

Despite the sharp criticisms made of Gitman’s study by critics, it at least attempted to apply social history methodologies and the history of the everyday to the study of the Holocaust. If Gitman’s flawed study endeavored to understand

¹⁹ See, for example, Maria Vulesica’s review of *When Courage Prevailed*, H-Soz U-Kult, 20 September 2012; Weiss 2011. The Croatian translation published in 2012 was, not surprisingly, a bestseller.

how ordinary people attempted to negotiate Ustasha terror, this was an approach which has been almost singularly lacking in the scholarship on aryanization in Croatia since the 1990s. Taking a predominantly “from above” approach, the few research articles written on the subject have concentrated exclusively on the confiscation and “nationalization” of specifically Jewish property and assets, ignoring the mass dismissals of Jews from the workplace, omitting any discussion of the victims or the beneficiaries except at a superficial level and providing little insight into the workings or day-to-day dynamics of the agencies tasked with aryanization. Like Gitman’s book, these studies marginalized the experience of Serbs and Roma under aryanization. A good example of this approach is Zlata Živaković-Kerže’s 2007 microhistory about the nationalization of the property of Jews in the town of Osijek. While it contains interesting details about the system of aryanization and the nationalization of the property and assets of local Jews, its narrative approach means that the reader learns little about the perspectives of the victims or the bureaucrats in charge of confiscation, let alone those of ordinary Croat bystanders. Who were these individuals? How did the officials feel about the work they were asked to carry out and how did this affect their relationships with colleagues and relatives? How did ordinary Jews attempt to negotiate the terror and their economic destruction? Articles such as these give us little insight. In fact, large parts of Živaković-Kerže’s essay simply describe the introduction of the anti-Semitic laws, the methods by which the property and assets of the Jewish community were confiscated and individual lists of affected Jews whose assets were confiscated. What is missing is any kind of meaningful argumentation or analysis (Živaković-Kerže 2007, 97–116). Nada Kisić-Kolanović’s article about the statewide nationalization of Jewish property suffers from a similar approach. Like Živaković-Kerže, Kisić-Kolanović’s article is heavy on detail, especially about the complicity of Croatian co-operatives and state agencies and institutions in the confiscation and nationalization of Jewish assets, but lacking in analysis. Moreover, the essay contains a number of assertions which are questionable and seemingly generated by the top-down methodology the writer has taken. For example, Kisić-Kolanović argues, largely on the basis of post-war testimony by Ustasha officials on trial, that the driving pressure for aryanization came from the German occupation authorities or, at least, was introduced by the Ustasha regime as a means of winning favor with the occupation authorities and cementing Croatia’s place in the new Europe. If this claim holds true, it suggests that aryanization was

a top-down hierarchical process, obviating the need for any bottom up analysis. Aside from the unreliability of the sources, the suspicion remains that the historiographical approach used here and the top-down arguments employed represents a form of distancing in which the blame is placed on the occupation authorities as a means of reducing the culpability of the Ustasha movement and the involvement of some ordinary Croats. Given this that was an interpretation also favored by historians and politicians in both Yugoslavia and nationalist post-1990s Croatia though for different reasons, it is perhaps not surprising that this interpretation should find its way into articles about aryanization written by Croatian scholars educated under the socialist system and working in post-independence Croatia (Kisić-Kolanović 1998, 429–453).

Two more recent works on the Holocaust, aryanization and nationalization in Croatia in the 1940s deserve mention since they represent examples of scholarship which combine Gitman's social history approach with the greater empiricism of historians like Kisić-Kolanović and Živaković-Kerže. As such they provide an indication of where research on aryanization in Croatia might be heading. Ivo and Slavko Goldstein's *The Holocaust in Croatia* is an important addition to the literature because in its detailed discussion of aryanization as a constituent part of the Holocaust it considers not only the confiscation of property, assets and businesses but in addition the mass dismissals of Jews from the workplace, their ghettoization and wider exclusion from the national economy and marketplace. Like nearly all studies of aryanization by Croatian scholars, it pays no attention to the parallel economic destruction of the Serbs and Roma which is a vital component in understanding the dynamics of aryanization. Nor is there any analysis of the inner workings of the agencies involved in implementing these policies or of the impact it had on the economy or consumers. Despite the fact that the study is purely narrative with little analysis and no argumentation, in other respects the study represents an important step forward. The book makes effective use of "from below" methodologies, integrating petitions, letters and diaries of Jewish victims into its discussion (Goldstein and Goldstein 2016). Many of the same observations apply to Naida Michal-Brand's fascinating article about the economic fate of Jews in wartime Croatia and the post-war Yugoslavia. Her study, exploring aspects of both divergence and continuity in anti-Semitism and the nationalization and confiscation legislation of post-war Yugoslavia and wartime Croatia, likewise represents something of a breakthrough. Michal-Brand focuses on the prosecution of a

group of Jewish employees of the Na-Ma department store in Zagreb on charges of “economic corruption.” Her case study illustrates that while the trial and harsh sentences the accused received were not driven by racial anti-Semitism as they had been under the Ustasha regime but rather by anti-capitalist ideology and economic concerns, in both states Jews were scapegoats in campaigns of economic “cleansing,” suggesting the fragility and ambiguity of life for Yugoslav Jews in the post-Holocaust era. Unfortunately, despite the personal and moving stories Michal-Brand relates, her approach is a narrative, top-down one at the expense of a “from below” and subjective one which is ideally suited to this kind of social microhistory. We learn little about Michal-Brandl’s subjects in terms of how they felt and what they said. Likewise, we get little sense of where public attitudes towards Jews lay either in “anti-corruption” trials like this or more generally, the role played by their colleagues in their prosecutions and the long-term impacts of such trials in the workplace. Nor is it clear even how newspapers covered such trials. As with so much Croatian historiography about the Ustasha regime and the Holocaust, recent scholarship raises many questions but provides fewer answers (Mihal-Brandl 2016, 103–127).

3. A SHORT HISTORY OF ARYANIZATION IN WARTIME CROATIA

Aryanization in the wartime Croatian state was characterized by its rapid, radical and ambitious nature. Simply put, the architects of aryanization in Croatia attempted to achieve in the space of a few months what it had taken Nazi Germany a decade to achieve. In addition, they aimed to economically exclude not just Jews as had been the case in the Third Reich but also Serbs and Roma. Throughout 1941 and into 1942, the newly established Ministry for the National Economy [Ministarstvo narodnog gospodarstva – NARGOS] with other agencies and ministries introduced a series of laws restricting the economic activities of the Serbs, Jews and settled Roma.²⁰ In interwar Yugoslavia, many private and public enterprises had been required by the state to employ business and labor commissioners to ensure

²⁰ While settled Roma were the victims of aryanization, most Roma on the territory of the Ustasha state were nomadic and the Roma business-class was very small. Generally, the plight of the Roma has been inadequately covered by historians of wartime Croatia. A younger generation of scholars is beginning to rectify this situation. See, for example, Vojak, Papo and Tahiri 2015.

that the activities of factories and businesses harmonized with the priorities of the state and to protect the rights of workers. Moreover, during the late 1930s an increasingly centrally-planned industrial policy emphasizing collective agreements, corporate economic ideas and campaigns against the “foreign” ownership of businesses was reflected in the workplace. Nevertheless, there was no systematic policy of targeting or purging particular national or religious groups and commissioners were not agents of economic cleansing. After 10 April 1941, the function of the commissioner became a far more ideological and powerful one, however. On 18 April, NARGOS introduced a law dissolving the duties of pre-war commissioners in financial institutions. They were replaced by new Ustasha commissioners who were empowered to remove Serb and Jewish employees and personnel.²¹ Shortly after this, the ministry along with the DRP and Office for Economic Regeneration [Ured obnovu privrede – UOP] published a series of laws aimed at the economic exclusion of the Serbs, Jews and Roma. These include law requiring Serbs, Jews and Roma to register their property, assets and businesses with the state: the same statute also applied to all businesses where at least one of the owners was a Jew. Serb and Jewish bank accounts were frozen to prevent the “flight of capital” and NARGOS stipulated the sealing of all safety deposit boxes held in banks, building societies and businesses, a measure that overwhelmingly affected Serbs and Jews. The impact of this financial legislation was immediate: overnight large numbers of formerly affluent Serbs, Jews and settled Roma were impoverished and, worse, became, effectively, hostages of the state.²² The repercussion was magnified by an expulsion program in towns and cities organized by the Ustasha police and local city authorities to move Serbs and Jews from their apartments in the more affluent parts of the city and concentrate them in less prosperous outlying neighborhoods. This was accompanied by draconian curfew orders which stipulated the hours Serbs and Jews could shop and the parts of the city where they could buy their goods. As one function of ghettoization was to ensure that Serbs and Jews were

21 „Odredba o ukidanje povjerenštva kod privatnih novčanih,” *Narodne novine*, 18 April 1941. See also „Zakonska odredba o imenovanju povjerenika kod privrednih poduzeća,” *Narodne novine*, 19 April 1941.

22 „Zakonska odredba o obaveznoj prijavi imetka Židova i židovskih poduzeća,” *Narodne novine*, 5 June 1941; „Naredba o dužnosti prijave Srbijanca,” *Narodne novine*, 7 June 1941; „Zakonska odredba o nadzoru novcem, vrijednostima i predmetima koji se nalaze u sigurnosnim predmetima (safe-pretnici) novačanih zavoda i drugih privrednih poduzeća,” *Narodne novine*, 2 May 1941.

separated from Croat citizens, wherever possible, local Ustasha authorities and the police aimed to ensure that Croat consumers did not come into contact with the ghettoized groups in the street or marketplace.²³ The expulsion and ghettoization of Serbs and Jews continued into 1942 and was ruthlessly carried out by Ustasha police agencies, especially the student battalions.²⁴

In the first few weeks of the new state, Ustasha commissioners were appointed to confiscated Serb, Jewish and Roma businesses. Meanwhile, NARGOS appointed commissioners to oversee many other private enterprises as well as all state ones to ensure workers were inculcated with the new ideological concepts as well as to lay the groundwork for the aryanization of the workforce. As part of their duties preparing businesses for nationalization, liquidation or selling off, commissioners were required to write to UOP and its successor agency, the State Directorate for Economic Reconstruction (Državno ravnateljstvo za gospodarstvenu ponovu – DRGP), every month. DRGP officials then used these reports as the basis of deciding whether the business was being run properly.²⁵ Despite the fact that one of the main rationales given for the confiscation of Serb and Jewish businesses was that they were being inefficiently and corruptly administered by their previous owners and were exploitative towards Croat workers, many of the first cohort of commissioners were often fervently ideological, highly ambitious and intrinsically corrupt though lacking in any business acumen or managerial ability. Consequently, prosperous businesses were quickly run into the ground. A German internal report of 24 February 1942 looking at the considerable economic challenges facing the Croatian state emphasized that alongside visceral hatred of Serbs and Jews on the part of many Ustasha officials, there was a strong element of class resentment and hunger for social mobility. Aryanization was characterized by thieving, appropriation, plundering and mismanagement of the assets of the Serbs and Jews on the part of commissioners and members of the movement. “Up

23 Orders from Marijan Nikšić, 8 May 1941, HDA, NDH, ZŠ, 104/19 and 1289/41/104.36. The ghettos were “open” because they were never physically closed off and were regulated through curfews enforced by the Ustasha police and Ustasha Surveillance Service [Ustaška nadzorna služba – UNS].

24 See, for example, the leader of the Student Section of RAVSIGUR to the Jewish Section of the Ustasha Police, 5 August 1942, HDA, NDH, MUP, 101.55/304.223.

25 The duties for Ustasha commissioners of factories and enterprises are set out in „Zakonska odredba o dužnostima i pravima povjerenika imenovanih kod privatnih poduzećima,” *Narodne novine*, 17 May 1941.

to now Aryanization has been understood as distribution of rich sinecures because until the seizure of power Ustasha activists had to contend with severe problems. Many had to emigrate; they had spent years abroad...When these émigrés returned, they were rewarded with Serb and Jewish businesses, unless they were recruited for government service. In economic terms, this was certainly harmful because in spite of real or supposed political merits, these people are economic newcomers who cannot manage these businesses effectively.” (Safrian 2010, 146–7)

On 23 May 1941, the Ministry for Cooperatives [Ministarstvo Udružbe – MinDruž] introduced the key piece of legislation related to the aryanization of the workforce. The new employment law enabling the mass removal of Serbs, Jews and Roma from the workplace gave commissioners two months to dismiss all workers whose work was felt to be detrimental to the enterprises or else was no longer needed, with one month’s notice and two months’ severance pay. Although the law, which was only effective until 31 August, did not specify any particular group of workers, it was interpreted by most commissioners as providing legislative instruction for the purging of non-Croat employees.²⁶ Prior to this law, commissioners had continued employing Jewish and Serb employees, particularly those in specialist roles or senior managerial positions. After the introduction of the law, most Ustasha commissioners quickly complied with the legislation but some, misunderstanding the intention of the legislation, assumed that it was asking them to sack any employee regardless of their nationality, including Croat workers, who was surplus to requirements. Others still, who were more pragmatic and wanted to retain skilled or experienced workers for the prosperity of the business, tried to circumvent the law by asking for an exception. This was particularly the case with Jewish workers: in numerous instances. Ustasha commissioners even wrote to the ministry asking for their release from concentration camps.²⁷ Commissioners also wrote on behalf of skilled Serb workers, stressing their employees’ loyalty to the new state.²⁸ At the same time, workers became active agents in the purges. For

26 „Zakonska odredba o otkazivanju i otpisivanju privatnih radnika i namještnika,” *Narodne novine*, 23 May 1941.

27 See, for example, BiH, ARS, BL, Zbirka od 1941 i 1942 godine, Commissioners of the Sabetaj D. Papo factory to RAVSIGUR, 4 October 1941, unnumbered.

28 See, for example, Milan Bičanić to the Section for Social Politics, Ministry for Cooperatives, 5 June 1941 HDA, NDH, MZU, 2.226/1487/J. However, I have found no examples of commissioners intervening to secure the release of Serb workers from concentration camps.

some this meant intervening on behalf of threatened Jewish colleagues and, less frequently it seems, for Serb co-workers. But others were cogs in the machinery of terror, supporting and even leading the denunciations against fellow workers on shop floors, in factories and offices. In fact, the Directorate of the Ustasha Police, the UOP, DRP and other security and planning departments as well as Ustasha commissioners were inundated with so many anonymous denunciations in the first weeks of the state that the police directorate publicly announced that in future it would disregard unattributed denunciations. Božidar Čerovski, the commissioner for public order and security, added that there would be the “harshest punishments” for uncorroborated or vexatious denunciations.²⁹

Under the 23 May law, thousands of Serb and Jewish workers became jobless and penniless almost overnight. The sense of terror which pervaded after they had received the neat typed dismissal notices is evidenced in the petitions they wrote to their employers, commissioners and MinDruž in the days and weeks appealing to be reinstated. While some Serb workers were successful in getting their jobs back or, more usually, a different less skilled, lower-paid position in the same enterprise this was relatively uncommon. More usually, these unemployed Serbs found themselves destitute and on the streets searching for a way to feed themselves and their families. Many middle-class Serbs and skilled workers applied for permission from the Ustasha authorities to “emigrate” to Serbia but applications had to be made in writing and endorsed by a local Ustasha official and the regional authorities. Also, eligible candidates needed to be debt-free, to have paid all their taxes and to agree to transfer all their assets, except what they could transport, to the state. In any event, approval could take months and once it had been approved, the applicant had to sign a waiver agreeing never to return to the Independent State of Croatia and permanently giving up their citizenship rights. Applying to leave the Independent State of Croatia under these circumstances therefore meant becoming a “former person.” Leaving was an option open to few Jewish employees who had lost their jobs and found themselves penniless and trapped inside a state determined to eradicate them. Although some Jews realized early on the fate which awaited them and managed to escape to the Adriatic Coast and then to Italy or else fled to the countryside to join the Partisans, many others did not understand or refused to believe that economic destruction was the first step on

29 „Redarstvo neće primati nepotpisanih prijava,” *Hrvatski narod*, 27 April 1941.

the road to their extermination. Convinced that expressions of loyalty, evidence of their past patriotism and absolute obedience would save them, they remained in their apartments, fatalistically.³⁰

If the driving force for aryanization came from above in the form of the Ustasha leadership, pressures from below were also an important factor. Some of the central features of the national economy in wartime Croatia appear to have come from ideas suggested by workers' unions and employees' organizations, in particular, the Croat Workers' Union [Hrvatski radnički savez – HRS] and Alliance of Croatian Private Employees [Savez hrvatskih privatnih namještnika – SHPN].³¹ Led by ambitious, radical and often young leaders like Marko Biljan, Alojije Pečnik and Mladen Baković, these syndicates were eager that aryanization would provide opportunities for a "new cadre" of workers in an economy free from Jewish and "foreign" influence. At the end of April 1941, leaders of the SHPN and HRS visited the Poglavnik to express their support for the new state and to underline the suffering the ordinary Croat worker had endured under the oppression of foreign bosses in the 1930s. Of course, the visit of Croat workers to the Poglavnik also enabled the Ustasha movement through the coverage of party and daily newspapers to present the Poglavnik as the protector of Croat workers. After a speech by the Poglavnik in which he promised that the new Ustasha state would be a workers' state, worker and employee representatives made a number of suggestions about the radical remaking of the Croatian economy. Among their demands were the suppression of high prices and price rises for essential goods; a minimum living wage covering the needs of workers and employees; the surveillance of capital and the whole of the "Croatian national economy and especially foreign and Jewish businesses"; the appointment of commissioners to financial institutions; and the removal of citizenship from all "undesired people who were not native to the territory of the Independent State of Croatia before 1918" (mostly a reference to

30 For an eyewitness account of this way of thinking by a Holocaust survivor see: Bruno Carmon, "Zagreb, May 31, 1941," *The Ser-Charlap Family Newspaper* 10, no. 2 (June-July 1999): 1-3. For academic studies see generally: Goldstein and Goldstein, *The Holocaust in Croatia*; Erdeljac, "Also a Mother to us Jews"; Yeomans, "Ordinary People Between the National Community and Everyday Terror"; idem, "In Search of Myself."

31 The HRS and SHPN were nationalist syndicates affiliated to the right-wing of the Croatian Peasant Party in the interwar period. After the Ustasha movement came to power in 1941, they were the only legal trade unions in the state and became the official party syndicates for workers and white-collar employees.

Serbian volunteers who had settled in Croatia after the First World War).³² Likewise, on 1 July 1941 the president of the SHPN Baković set out his ideas about the appropriation of Jewish and foreign businesses by Croat workers in the daily newspaper *Novi list*. The newspaper reported that the SHPN had given NARGOS a set of suggestions about “the taking over of Jewish and foreign enterprises by Croat employees” in order that the Croat people “could produce a new cadre of young and professionally ready businessmen who could assist in the great task of the renewal of the Croatian economy.” It added that in the past few days the Section of Employees for Leather and Shoemaking Supplies had sent a recommendation to the UOP that it take over the large leather and shoemaking supplies enterprises in the city of Zagreb and outside it “which are found overwhelmingly in the hands of foreign elements, especially Jews.”³³

In fact, many of these suggestions were either adopted by NARGOS and other planning and economic ministries or were already in development. This applied not just to recommendations about the confiscation of property and assets and deportations but also the establishment of a strict prices and incomes control policy. Ostensibly, this was under the remit of the Office for the Determination of Prices and Incomes [Ured za oblikovanje cijene i nadnica – UOCN]. Its conflicts with other economic and social ministries about incomes and prices policies, however, proved to have a profoundly negative impact on the economic organization of the state. In the context of a disastrous industrial policy, ruinous fiscal demands imposed by the German occupation authorities, a draconian rationing program which proved impossible to control and systematic bribery and corruption, the incomes and prices policy led ultimately to uncontrollable inflation and unsustainable rises in basic consumer goods as well as the rapid expansion of an already-lively black market and, eventually, an economy based largely on barter as the kuna, the state currency, became worthless (Sundhaussen 1983, 296–299).

Economic dysfunction was compounded by the economic exclusion of Serbs and Jews, in particular, from the national economy and the confiscation of their businesses. In addition to the loss of revenue caused by sharply reduced spending power on the part of Serb, Jewish and Roma consumers, chaotic conditions prevailed in many confiscated businesses while productivity sank and inefficiency increased as enterprises were asset stripped, divided or liquidated. Another

32 “Hrvatski radnici predlažu,” *Hrvatska krajina*, 29 April 1941.

33 “Sugestije SHPN za preuzimanje židovskih trgovina,” *Novi list*, 1 July 1941.

important factor was the loss of skill and experience in factories and businesses following the purge of Serb and Jewish managers, engineers, technicians and experts and the accelerated promotion of Croat workers in their place who lacked the knowledge or aptitude to serve as adequate replacements. Finally, severe disruption was caused by the process of mass dismissals. First, it created significant divisions between those Croat workers who supported the purging of Serbs and Jews from the workforce and those who opposed it. Second, although it provided a high level of social mobility for Croat workers at the bottom of the ladder it encouraged a wider culture of denunciation in the workplace which spread far beyond the groups targeted in the purges. Third, although after-work leisure clubs such as Odmor attempted to repair divisions and manufacture consent in the factories, this had limited success. Instead of creating a new cadre of model Ustasha workers, many Croat workers interpreted the purges specifically and aryanization more generally as an anti-elite, anti-managerial campaign and a means of asserting their rights. As workers grew increasingly militant in their demands for better pay, labor conditions and collective bargaining, strikes and stoppages proliferated and denunciations of directors, commissioners and the managerial elite became commonplace features of the aryanized workplace. In short, aryanization which promised social mobility for those at the bottom of the social ladder, the incarnation of a new economic middle-class and model worker and a purified national economy instead became increasingly associated with endemic corruption, a rapidly shrinking economy and a catastrophic decline in living standards.³⁴

4. TOWARDS AN EVERYDAY HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST

Aryanization in wartime Croatia is the story of the everyday economics of the Holocaust, but more than that, it is a paradigm for the complexity of life in occupied Europe. In the final section, this article provides an outline of what an integrated history of aryanization in Croatia might look like and where it might go in the future. Aryanization in Croatia affected every aspect of society: the economy, the marketplace, buying and selling, social relations and the everyday lives of

³⁴ For more details about the cultural politics of workplace purges, see Rory Yeomans, "Manufacturing Consent: Leisure Organizations and Model Workers in Croatia's Aryanized Factories, 1941-1945." Unpublished MS.

the state's citizens. Above all, it upended the lives of the targets of economic destruction. The archives in Zagreb, Karlovac and Banja Luka are full of expressions of hope, fear, desperation and optimism as evidenced in the petitions, letters and written communication of victims, beneficiaries and perpetrators. In their correspondence, written in ink or on typewriters, their individual voices and experiences are brought to life. Take the letter from Samuel Atijas, a forty-one year old Jewish former sales assistant at the haberdasher's shop of Jozef D. Nahmijas in Banja Luka, who was dismissed in late April 1941. In his simple letter, he asks the store's commissioner for a month's compensation. "I am appealing to you on the basis of the law regarding the termination of business relations with agents and employees of 23 May 1941 to pay me severance pay of one month. I was dismissed on 25 April 1941 and at the time only received pay for the current month of April in arrears. I am extremely grateful. Sincerely, Samuel Atijas." True, his letter written on 3 June 1941 does not tell us much about how he was feeling, but it does indicate the extent of financial troubles victims found themselves in following their dismissal, the lack of options open to them and the wide scope of aryanization. But it also illustrates the way in which some victims, initially at least, sought to use the state's own discriminatory legislation to defend their rights. The reply to his letter is also revealing. A note at the bottom of his letter read: "He was employed from 1 March 1938 to 25 April 1941 at a wage of 1600 dinars monthly" while the formal response from the shop's commissioner was blunt. "Not accepted! The above legal statute only came into force on 23 May 1941 and there is no provision for retrospective acts according to which I do not intend to pay the severance pay of 3320 dinars."³⁵

A second letter, this time from a dismissed Serb to the Serbian Section of the Ustasha police directorate in July 1941. Dimitrije Marić, a young father of two from Tuškanac, Zagreb, described himself as "a clerk without work," having lost his job following the introduction of the 23 May employment law. Unlikely to find another one because of his national identity and destitute after the confiscation of his apartment, like many middle-class professional Serbs in a similar situation he asked permission to leave Croatia, emphasizing his loyalty to the Croatian state in order to do so. "I have nearly completed the form for myself, my wife Marija Marić and our two small children Dubravko and Radojka Marić," he wrote. "I am asking the police directorate to give us permission to resettle from Zagreb in Belgrade

35 Samuel Atijas to the commissioner of Josef D. Nahmijas haberdashery store, 3 June 1941 and reply of 9 June 1941, BiH, ARS, BL, 631.110/41.

and, as this is a permanent move, at the same time, to be able to transport our kitchen furniture and a bed from one of the bedrooms as well as the kitchen crockery. The furniture is made from soft wood. Seeing as I remain without work and as an Orthodox can't get any other position and I have been on the streets with my wife and two children without any means of support, I am asking to be allowed to emigrate from Zagreb. For the whole of my time in Zagreb – in other words over the past twelve years – I never committed any crimes against Croatian culture nor the Croatian nation but on the contrary was always a friend of the Croats and have remained to this day, something which can be affirmed by many respectable Croats. I have never been subject to police or legal measures. My possessions, as the result of long years of work, amount to the above furniture and I am asking to be allowed to take it with me.” His petition was accompanied by confirmation that he did not have any debts, did not have a criminal record and an inventory of his modest possessions.³⁶ A third letter, by contrast, from Marko Džilitović, a struggling twenty-nine year old businessman, illustrates both the obstacles the state put in the way of those middle-class Serbs attempting to leave and the revenue-generating objectives informing them. It also emphasizes the sense of desperation and danger felt by many Serb businessmen and professionals and the determination to leave. Džilitović's application to emigrate seemed hopeless in view of the debts he had accrued while the unprofitable nature of his business made his offer to liquidate his business to pay off his debts an extremely unattractive one. Nevertheless, he stated his case with candor. In his letter to the DRP, he wrote: “I run a ladies' hats and accessories business at Jelačić Square 4. I have had no success with it at all up to now. It's not possible to remain in this business any longer because I am already three months behind with my rent and there's no way I could improve the business to settle my outstanding accounts. That's why I am asking for approval to liquidate my business. My business shifts about 40.000-80.000 dinars in manufactured goods annually but these are not sought-after goods, which can be converted into cash at any time. My family live in Serbia and I am a citizen of Serbia and I will try, if I am allowed to go there, to make a new life for myself. So, I am asking the directorate to allow me to transfer this money because you need assets when setting up a business. I am somewhat in arrears in tax as well as in my rent, which

³⁶ Dimitrije Marić to the directorate of Ustasha police in Zagreb, 19 July 1941, HDA, NDH, DRGP, 445.1076/ 051416.

I plan to pay in installments until I am quits. In terms of tax I have accrued up to September this year the sum of 6500 dinars in back payments.”³⁷

Samuel Atijas perished in the Holocaust, probably at the Ustasha camp of Jadovno in Gospić, but the fate of Dimitrije Marić and his family and Marko Džilitović is not known. Did they get to Serbia? Did they survive the war? Did they ever return to Croatia? These details are unclear though Džilitović's prospects, in particular, were not strong. However, their dialogue with the state reveals a great deal about them: their economic status, family status, situation and characters. Likewise, the correspondence of beneficiaries enables us to build up a picture of them too. The letters of those who hoped to be beneficiaries suggest that they could also sometimes fulfill the role of perpetrators. Like the victims of aryanization who could express a variety of emotions and sentiments, beneficiaries were complex individuals and their actions, petty resentments and aspirations for social mobility were often crucial in determining the fate of the Serb and Jewish business class. As the following letter from Stjepan Hulentić, a captain in the Commissariat for Promotions and Decorations in the Ministry for the Croatian Army [Ministarstvo domobrana – MINDOM], illustrates Jews, Serbs and Roma were not the only targets of cleansing: other “foreign” groups perceived as intruders were singled out. Likewise, the letter shows the extent to which denunciations and applications for confiscated assets were not solely driven by aspirations of social mobility or consumer zeal, but were influenced by ordinary citizens' experiences of economic deprivation, overcrowding and poverty. Hulentić wrote to the Jewish Section of the Ustasha police on 1 May 1942 explaining his urgent need for a an apartment. He had his eye on a Jewish one and, contrasted his “Aryan” background with the Jewish origins of the current tenant. Paradoxically, as Antun Prpić's petition to the Karlovac authorities makes clear, despite their essential role in the economic exclusion of Serbs, Jews and Roma from the national economy, the correspondence of beneficiaries was sometimes characterized by a similarly desperate tone as that of the victims of aryanization. Nevertheless, Hulentić's petition to the Ustasha Police not only provides information about the socio-economic situation of Croatian citizens and, by extension, the accommodation challenges faced by the wartime state, but also sheds light on how, like the victims, they quickly learnt to “speak” the language of the state.

³⁷ Marko Džilitović to the DRP, 17 July 1941, HDA, NDH, Ponova/SO/OS, 446.1076/unnumbered.

I am asking to be given an apartment in Ilica, number 183 on the ground floor left... My wife and I are of pure Aryan origin. The reasons I am seeking a an apartment are the following: 1. According to information, a JEWESS called Berta Gross is living on the ground floor left apartment at 183 Ilica with her male lover, some SLOVENE. They have resided in this apartment for six years. Until recently, this apartment was made out in her name but after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, fearing that they could lose this apartment, it was made out in this Slovene's name and she now presents herself as the subtenant. Information about the years they have lived there and in whose name the apartment is made out was given to me by the landlord (a young man). So, first of all the tenant was a JEWESS alone and then a SLOVENE with a JEWESS as subtenant. 2. I am a married officer. From 7 December 1941 (the day of my marriage), I have not had an apartment. I am living together with my brother-in-law (also an officer) in a one-room apartment. So, that's five of us in one room. A number of times I have contacted the accommodation office of the City Authorities but was always turned down with the explanation that there were no apartments. My wife is *pregnant* and in a few months will give birth. It is not possible to stay in the current situation (in other words two families living in a one-room apartment). I have been transferred to service in Bosnia which I must start any day soon. So that my wife who is pregnant can at least be assured an apartment before my departure, I ask you to give me the above apartment because it is my conviction as an officer in the Croatian army that I have more right to it than some JEWESS and one who is concealing herself as a subtenant.³⁸

Of course, not all of those aspiring beneficiaries who wrote to the Jewish Section of the Ustasha police or the DRGP were in such straitened circumstances: Nevertheless, one of the distinguishing features of aryanization was the economically and socially-leveling impact it had, enabling some at the bottom of the social ladder to gain career advancement or social mobility. This applied not just to the young cohort of officials, many of them students, employed by agencies such as the DRP and DRGP but also to many applicants for the goods and assets of the victims of aryanization. Factory workers, hairdressers, tailors, waiters and chauffeurs as well as businessmen were presented with the opportunity to acquire enterprises, rent apartments or gain roles which, if not always well paid, offered a level of

³⁸ Stjepan Hulentić to the Jewish Section of the Ustasha Police, 1 May 1942, HDA, NDH, RUR/ŽO, 12.252/431.

prestige and power. The socially-leveling character of the system meant that you did not need to have expertise or experience: enthusiasm and ideological fervor were often enough or, at least, that's what applicants believed at the time. One of these was Ante Mlinar, a twenty-one year old party activist, who applied to the DRGP in September 1941 for a position as a commissioner in a local Jewish business. Despite possessing no obvious entrepreneurial skills or knowledge, he wrote full of expectation: "I carry out the duty of a commander in the labor service and am departmental administrator for youth paramilitary training in Borovo. From 1 October this year I will enter service in the Croatian State Theatre in Osijek as a member of the drama troupe and as my beginning salary is not enough to live on I am asking you to consider my request. To my request I add the following information: I was born in 1920 in Knin. I completed four years of elementary school and four years of the gymnasium in Split. After this, I went to acting school in Zagreb. In the hope that you can address my request to my satisfaction, I remain for the homeland prepared!" The expectation that ideological purity would count for more than business acumen was eloquently expressed in the recommendation from Mlinar's regional center which "most warmly endorsed" his application on the basis that he was "a good Croat and Ustasha to whom a commissioner role could be entrusted."³⁹

As already noted, the consequences of the corporate economic system introduced in Croatia in 1941 were not hard to predict and form a crucial part of any history of aryanization and the Holocaust in Croatia. There is a rich collection of archival and printed sources in the form of economic journals, statistical reports, economic analyses and eyewitness reports which convey the impact the removal of so many Serb and Jewish experts had on the economy. In the journal *Ekonomist*, Aleksandar Vadkov, an economist at the State Statistical Institute, juxtaposed the positive impact of aryanization with an acknowledgement of the structural problems the purging of the workplace had brought. "The first concern of the Croatian state authorities after the establishment of the N.D.H. was the quick and fundamental removal from all branches of economic life and especially from industry of all antinational and antisocial elements with the transfer of economic enterprises into the hand of individuals or the state. Because of the large number and leading positions of such workers, often experts, removed from economic life, this process

39 Ante Mlinar to the DRGP, 24 September 1941, HDA, NDH, Ponova, 1882.1076/2348. | 115

could not be implemented without, unavoidably in such situations, causing undesired consequences and difficulties,” he conceded (Vadkov 1941, 225–233). Vadkov’s utopian vision of a planned purified economy under the control of the state degenerated into a real-time nightmare as a disastrous prices and incomes policy, the site of ideological battle between the UOCN and the DRGP, exacerbated by rationing and severe supply problems, led to runaway inflation, an expanding black market and severe shortages of basic goods (Sundhaussen 1983, 296–299). A perfect storm meant that while prices were continually rising because of shortages, wages did not keep pace with index price rises. This meant, in turn, that ordinary Croat consumers could not compete with the prices offered by Italian or German soldiers who were also willing to pay in their own currencies rather than the increasingly worthless kuna. Official prices became meaningless and price controls entirely ineffective as costs of goods lurched further upward, widening the gap between outgoings and incomes. A German situation report from Brčko in December 1941 described in vivid detail the catastrophic conditions emerging and the dilemmas facing economic planners. “The situation has not improved. There is a serious lack of staple goods and fire material as before and an unwelcome high price is paid on the black market for existing supplies so that the poorer classes of people go hungry and freeze...Firewood, in Brčko, for example, costs 500 kunas per square meter insofar as it is available. The delivery of staple goods from the Bosnian outskirts is as good as broken and people fear bringing staple goods and firewood into the town first of all because of the small amount of staple goods available and secondly due to fear regarding violence from the side of the rebels... The market which otherwise at this time of year is very plentiful in dried fruits, especially dried plums, nuts etc., lies completely flat and of the 170 wagons of dried plums, 37 wagons have now gone to the Reich (at a cost of forty Reichmarks with free entry) while the remainder is for the domestic market and in the major part sold to the Italians unofficially (currently brought at 21–22 liras, in other words at nearly 30–40% more than the market price). In Brčko, this leaves around seventy wagons of dried plums and 5–6 wagons of nuts available, leaving aside the possibility that they will have already been bought by several parties.”⁴⁰

However, it was perhaps the sheer level of cronyism, corruption and bribery in the marketplace from traders, consumers, the economic police force and officials

116 | 40 “Bericht über die Lage in Brčko,” 17 December 1941, PA-AA, 56/3, s. 6–7.

alike which was perhaps the most serious drag on any prospect of economic prosperity. In a letter to the exiled Croatian Peasant Party politician Jure Krnjević, the priest Augustin Juretić acknowledged that under the Ustasha movement there had been substantial social mobility for ideological supporters and sympathisers even if the consequences had been disastrous. “The bureaucracy is desperate,” he complained. “An office worker has three times more than he did before. The majority of them are incapable, without schooling or qualifications but with substantial pay. It is not unusual for chauffeurs, janitors and so on to become officials at grades eight, seven and even higher grades – people who, in the best case scenario, have graduated from evening school. The bureaucratic machinery is top heavy and unwieldy and, at least among those of Ustasha provenance, entirely corrupt.” It was in the economic sphere, he continued, that corruption was having the most serious impact, fuelling the discontent of Croat citizens. “Jewish and Serb estates have been given to and then plundered by deserving Ustashas. These estates have been entirely destroyed. It is estimated that from Jewish assets alone in houses, money, businesses, jewelry and so on at least 11 million dinars has disappeared into Ustasha pockets, if not more. Everything has been taken from the Jews. Some of it, the majority, has been pilfered by the Ustashas themselves.” In addition, many of these confiscated assets had been sold for less than a quarter of their real market price by the DRGP while other properties and businesses had been liquidated by the co-operatives Napredak and Hrvatska Radiša. It was not uncommon, he added, for Jewish jewelry, paintings and valuables to be sold for a few hundred kunas even though they were worth hundreds of thousands of kunas. He noted that it was the same situation with Serbian assets and estates. Many people had enriched themselves from this plunder, notably the DRGP director Ciril Čudina who had become a “multimillionaire”, while some ministries had even taken over the accessories, linen and clothes of Jews. Nor was it uncommon for “expensive Persian rugs to fall into the hands of Ustashas from the Lika or Imotski who cut up such rugs for use as rags.” But the worst situation was in relation to food supplies which were characterized by “complete disorganization” by the state and boycotts from peasants. “The scarcity of food is becoming greater every day...The *Zagrebčani* are feeding themselves from the black market. There are an enormous number of these. Fat for 360-400 kunas, until a couple of days ago salad was 100 kunas a kilo. It has already been a rarity for a number of weeks to get any kind of meat.” In the so-called undeveloped regions, he continued, people were dying from hunger while on islands

like Brač and Hvar they had been reduced to eating all the cats and donkeys. He added that “the economy has come to a complete halt. There are no raw materials. The limitations are enormous. Everything has disappeared.” He also had scathing things to say about the economic police who were charged with enforcing the state’s draconian laws on prices and trading, but whom he compared to brigand Hajduks. He observed that in Osijek the director of the economic police was a man called Godina from Sušak who in 1919 had plundered businesses “like a common brigand” but now was head of the economic police while another regional head of police was already a millionaire. Overall, economic conditions were worse than “desperate” and consumers were “worn out” while Germans and Italians were free to buy wherever they wanted, purchasing large numbers of businesses. “The value of money is a flat zero. People are convinced that the Italians and Germans are printing kunas in limitless amounts and introducing them [into the money supply system]” in order to further weaken the economy.⁴¹

Of course, Juretić was a well-known though clandestine opponent of the regime writing to one of the leaders of the Yugoslav government in exile who was living in London so his testimony has to be read with caution. Nonetheless, his claims are supported by the day by day, real-time accounts of those who were living in the state at the time. One of the most vivid accounts of what it was like to be a consumer attempting to survive under Croatia’s wartime economy was provided by the publicist and journalist Josip Horvat in his diaries for the war years between 1943 and 1945. The term “consumer” in the context of the aryanized marketplace could have multiple meanings since ultimately everyone who bought and sold in it was a consumer of one sort or another. While most often in the everyday experience of the Holocaust, it has been taken to mean the mass of civilian bystanders who were neither supporters of the occupation nor resisters, in wartime Croatia the nature of economic collapse was such that such distinctions were swept away: everyone, including the bureaucrats charged with implementing aryanization, endured the same economic hardships. Moreover, the totalitarian and revolutionary ambitions of the state meant that, in effect, through economic corporatism, genocide and propaganda, it became the sole intermediary and authority in everyday life for significant number of its urban citizens, including many of its victims. In

41 „Izveštaj A. Juretića J. Krnjeviću, 10 VI. 1942,” Diplomatski arhiv Saveznog sekretarijata za vanjske poslove, Emigrantska vlada, Razna konzularno-diplomatska predstavnštva 1940-1945, HDA, NDH, MUP, 2.22/3894 as cited in: Boban 1985, 155.

his diary, Horvat, living a meager existence as a collaborator at the state Croatian Publishing Bibliographic Institute, had plenty of personal experience to draw on, living as he did from commission to commission. Many of his diary entries were punctuated with concerns about his ability to survive, providing a vivid picture of how hard life was even for those who were relatively well remunerated. For example, on 9 February 1944 he writes: “A completely empty day...In the afternoon and evening air raid sirens. One lemon costs 1000 kunas – the law of supply and demand has collapsed into absurdity.” Later the same month we find him hard at work at the Institute, having just completed his contribution to a multi-author work on the history of Bosnia, *Povijest Bosne*, and asking a colleague how much he should charge as his consultancy fee. “I ask how much I should seek as a fee for *Povijest Bosne* – he says 300,000, but I will look for 400,000 kunas – when it comes who knows where the kuna will be. Other than that nothing important except for the fact that members of the working group for the *Encyclopaedia* have the right to a greater percentage of the consumption of electricity. And that is something.” In June that year, an entry records dramatic economic news: the opening of a butcher’s: “The sensation of the day: a butcher’s has been officially opened finally after two years: pork 1400 kunas; beef 1400 kunas.” On 2 July he is again consumed by the prices of goods, writing astutely of the role the state’s fixed maximum price policy is playing in exacerbating shortages of goods and encouraging the growth of the black market: “In the piazza of maximum prices, the consequence is that meat has disappeared and the piazza is generally empty and the price of what there is has bounced by 100%. Eggs are once again 60 kunas and they were already 35, a kilogram of garden strawberries is 2400 kunas.” Meanwhile, on 25 July 1944, more mordant still, he notes: “The bill for gas and electricity comes to around 8,000 kunas. All the women in the [publishing] house are outraged because of this huge increase. At precisely ten o’clock, the air raid siren goes and it is still ongoing now at 1.30pm. The whole of the morning has been lost.”⁴²

Given that the systemic crisis in the economy affected those consumers who ostensibly gained from aryanization or were part of the machinery of economic terror as much as those who were simply bystanders or victims, their experiences of economic privation are crucial to reconstructing a picture of what everyday life was like in the purified marketplace. The diverse testimonies they have left behind

⁴² Horvat 1989, diary entries for 9 February 1944, 22 February 1944, 23 June 1944, 2 July 1944, 25 July 1944, 46, 69, 107, 113, 133.

in the form of applications, internal correspondence, memos and private letters not only convey the practical challenges of living in an economy of scarcity but also often say important things about the bureaucratic machinery functioned, the violence of processes of aryanization or the personal impact of the terror. One of these small cogs of terror was Antun Mihaljević, a single father of two and former guard at a “resettlement camp” for deported Serbs. By December 1941, he was working in the offices of the DRGP office and that month sent a letter to his employers to complain about the impossibility of surviving on his low wages. His letter lays bare not only the desperate economic he found himself in but also the psychological toll being a guard had taken on him. “I have been employed at the directorate since 8 June 1941 at a monthly salary of 2500 kunas. Immediately after I was hired, I was sent to our local deportee and resettlement camp in Požega. It is not necessary to underline the stress of this service at the time of the dispatch and arrival of deportees, in other words emigrants. After the liquidation of the camp I was summoned to Zagreb and assigned to service in the section for economic assets. I am a widower with two vulnerable daughters whom I must support. The children are currently with my mother in Retkovac. On my current pay of 2500 kunas I have nothing left after food and an apartment and so can’t contribute anything to the care of my two vulnerable children. I am asking the above directorate, taking into account the above situation, to approve the appropriate increase in my salary. For a view of my work and expert economic knowledge, I cite as support the head of the department Ivo Kirin and Alozije Vrčković. I sincerely hope that the esteemed directorate will be able to fulfill my justified request. For the homeland prepared!”⁴³ Although Mihaljević’s plea was heartfelt and genuine, his modest request and claimed expertise did not impress his directorate. At the end of January 1942, the renamed Office for Nationalized Property [Ured za podržavljeni imetak] terminated his employment. This spoke not only to the ruthlessness of the economic and planning directorates towards their own staff, but also no doubt the fact that the “active” stage of aryanization was nearing completion, revenue was less and fewer staff were required. By contrast, at the height of aryanization between late spring and early autumn of 1941, there were many similar requests for wage rises from employees of the DRGP, especially from its ambitious, if financially straitened, student cadre. True, not all such applications were successful, but many

⁴³ Antun Mihaljević to the DRGP, undated but probably December 1941, HDA, NDH, Ponova/SO/OS441.1076/ 12/41.

were, even if petitioners did not always receive the increase or promotion they had been hoping for. Few, it seems, were fired for making such requests for practical resource reasons if nothing else.⁴⁴ Mihaljević's dismissal note was brusque and the terms of his employment termination harsh: "This is by way of letting you know that the State Treasury will not be hiring you onto its staff because of which your employment in this office is ending on 1 February 1942. Consequently, you will need to hand over all your documents and work to your current section head. We are honoring your salary for the month of February this year and you can collect this from the cash desk at this office on 2 February 1942 between midday and half past two. Everything that is owed to this office as well as public dues will be extracted from this pay." It seems that the letter was delivered to Mihaljević at his desk since he had signed underneath on the date the letter was written to acknowledge his receipt of it.⁴⁵ Ironically, then some perpetrators were not really beneficiaries: ultimately, they ended up in almost as desperate a situation as the victims of aryanization.

5. RECONSTRUCTING THE HOLOCAUST AS AN EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE IN WARTIME CROATIA

Despite the radical and drastic nature of aryanization, its entry into all aspects of citizens' lives and archives overflowing with the letters, testimonies and experiences of ordinary people, it remains among the most under-researched historiographical topics of wartime Croatia. In terms of the history of everyday life and history "from below" almost nothing exists. The strange absence of wartime Croatia from this historiography becomes even starker when the broader literature on aryanization in occupied Europe is taken into account. The real-time testimonies by those who experienced life and death under the Ustasha regime have much to tell us about economic and social conditions in the state and how ordinary people tried to survive, negotiate and circumvent them. However, more importantly by taking a "from below" perspective which includes exploring the lived

⁴⁴ See, for example, Marijan Radulić to Josip Rožanković, 9 July 1941, HDA, NDH, Ponova/SO/OS, 441.1076/216; petition from Martin Biljanić, 31 July 1941, HDA, NDH, Ponova/SO/OS/441.1076/unnumbered; Belizar Zečić to the DRGP, 1 August 1941, HDA, NDH, Ponova/SO/OS, 441.1076/unnumbered.

⁴⁵ Head of the Office for Nationalized Assets to Antun Mihaljević, 27 January 1942, HDA, NDH, Ponova/SO/OS, 441.1076/T 58/42

experiences of the victims of aryanization, those who benefitted from it and those who were involved in implementing the machinery of economic terror as well as those who resisted it, there is much to learn about how these groups interacted with each other and the often ambiguous dividing line between them.

Although many historians of wartime Croatia continue to view economic issues and the project to build a nationally autarchic economy as a peripheral subject, economic issues were not only central to the Ustasha regime's project of social engineering and the making of new people, but were an integral part of state terror and the program to eradicate Serbs, Jews and Roma. Moreover, an economic interpretation of Ustasha terror which draws on the voices of the victims, beneficiaries, perpetrators and ordinary consumers reveals a great deal about how society operated in towns and cities and how the policies and discourse of the Ustasha regime were received, understood, debated, interpreted, endorsed and resisted in factories, shops, workshops and department stores in complex ways their architects had not anticipated while also contributing to a better understanding of a variety of historiographical controversies. An integrated history of everyday economics during the Holocaust suggests that, contrary to socialist historiographical assumptions, ordinary Croats, including workers, had complex and often contradictory views towards the Independent State of Croatia and aryanization specifically, incorporating the heroic, humane and the horrible. Similarly, despite the loud claims of historical revisionists in contemporary Croatia, the program to eradicate "undesired elements" was not motivated by resistance from the Serb minority or political agitation by the state's Jews. As their petitions and letters illustrate, many of them sought to negotiate their survival, often through statements of loyalty to the state, or else through a permanent exit from it. Through the petitions, diaries and letters of ordinary people like Samuel Atijas, Antun Prpić or Marko Džilitović we can reconstruct the subjectivities of all those swept up in aryanization – their hopes, fears, aspirations and anxieties – recovering their voices, individuality and, above all, humanity, to produce an authentic picture of terror in real time.

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Neobično odsustvo ratne Hrvatske u studijama arijanizacije: tumačenje istoriografskih anomalija

Cilj članka je uputiti na stanje u istoriografiji o arijanizaciji u ratnoj Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj. Kroz analizu dosadašnjih i aktuelnih akademskih istorijskih narativa nastoji se bolje razumeti zašto je slučaj Hrvatske toliko često bio odsutan u komparativnim studijama arijanizacije u okupiranoj Europi. U članku se najpre razmatra nedavno istraživanje arijanizacije u dve druge jugoistočne države (Bugarske i Rumunije) čije se socio-ekonomsko ustrojstvo i iskustvo arijanizacije u značajnoj meri podudara s hrvatskim, imajući u vidu istraživanja arijanizacije u Hrvatskoj od 1945. godine. U daljem toku, ukazivanjem na korpus primarne i sekundarne građe, daje se pregled ključnih obeležja arijanizacije u Hrvatskoj. Naposljetku, time se sugeriše u kom pravcu bi se istraživanja o arijanizaciji mogla kretati u budućnosti, kako bi se osiguralo da Hrvatska postane sastavni deo širih rasprava o ekonomiji holokausta u okupiranoj Europi.

Ključne reči: arijanizacija, Holokaust, ustaški režim, Nezavisna država Hrvatska, istorija svakodnevnog života, Saul Friedländer, ekonomski teror

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YUGOSLAVIA AND REPARATION AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR

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In this work we briefly look at reparation for war damage which was made to Yugoslavia during World War II. Yugoslavia had a right to reparation from Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Reparations from Germany were set at Reparation Conference in Paris (in 1945), and from Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria at Paris Peace Conference (in 1946). Yugoslavia received very small amount of reparations and they were paid in different industrial devices and merchandise. Yugoslavia publicly writes off reparations to Bulgaria. She also tried to get reparations from Austria, but she didn't manage to realize that.

Key words: reparation, Yugoslavia, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, war damage.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN USSR, USA AND UK concerning reparation for war damage was made on Potsdam Conference (held from Jul 17th to August 2nd 1945). Three great powers then agreed the way of the division of reparations from Germany. USSR gain the right to collect reparations from eastern part of Germany and Austria, which were under their occupation, as well as from German property in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland and eastern part of Austria. Besides that, USSR should get a certain amount of reparations from the western Germany. USSR should detach one part of its reparation for the Poland reparations. All other countries were supposed to gain reparations from the western part of Germany which was occupied by western powers, and from the rest of German property abroad.¹

1 Diplomatic Archive of Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Republic of Serbia (DA MFA), Political Archive (PA) – str.pov. – 1946-1947 – F IV – d.5 – p. IV/437; Nikolajević 1956, 172–176, 211; Бартош 1948, 7-13; Živković 1975, 537–538; Ivanović 2009, 86. lajben@yahoo.com

In order to determine the amount of reparations from western part of Germany for every of damaged countries (except USSR and Poland), Conference on Reparation was organized from November 9th to December 21st, 1945, in Paris. Among eighteen participating countries, one was Yugoslavia. Every participating country reported its war damage.

Yugoslavia reported material damage of 9,145 billion of US dollars, and a loss of 1,700,000 of its inhabitants. She was the second country according to the reported material damage (after France), and first according to the reported number of inhabitants that lost their lives during the war.² Yugoslavia based its reparation claims on the active fights of her inhabitants against occupiers and the victims in that fights and during the occupation. She considered that her victims had more value than victims in other countries because of uprising fights against Germans and civilian victims that were the result of German retaliations for the uprising. She also called on greater material damage, citing that total loss of her national wealth was about 50%.³

Great powers insisted that reparation should not be in money but in German industrial assets. Also, they insisted that amount of reparations for each country should not be expressed in money, but in percent for each country. According to that, percentages were determined for two categories of reparation assets. Category A consisted from the German properties abroad, confiscated materials and current industrial production, and the category B from industrial devices and ships.⁴

When the quotas were shared Yugoslavia gained 6.6% from category A, and 9.6% from category B. Great powers obtain for themselves two figure quotas, while Yugoslavia was the “small” country that gain the biggest quotas.⁵

2 Archives of Yugoslavia (AJ) – Reparation Comission of FPR Yugoslavia (Reparaciona komisija Vlade FNRJ, fund 54) – 44 – 97 – 1945 Memorandum – Memorandum vlade DFJ по pitanju jugoslovenskih reparacionih potraživanja prema Nemačkoj; *Авугске и материјалне жртве Југославије у ратном напору 1941–1945*.

3 AJ – 54 – 44 – 98; DA MFA, PA – 1945 – F 24 – d.8 – XXIV/181– XXIV/189.

4 Бартш 1948, 13-14; Nikolajević 1956, 24; Živković 1975, 544–545.

5 AJ – Government Presidency of FPR Yugoslavia (Predsedništvo vlade FNRJ, fund 50) – 69 – 151 – 1945 – p. 66, 67 (Final act); AJ – 54 – 44 – 98 – Završni akti; Бартш 1948, 14; Nikolajević 1956, 205; Živković, 1975, 545.

Yugoslavia was not satisfied with the amount of reparations that was assigned to her, but she accepted it as a compromise, and like the only thing that she could get. She signed Final act of Conference on Reparation on January 14th, 1946.⁶

Soon after the signing of Final act, Commission for Reparation started with the delivery of German goods in terms of reparations. Due to the different delivery procedures, some countries gain more material than they were supposed to in one of two categories. Yugoslavia was among them. She received 14.72% instead of 9.6% of industrial devices from category B. But Yugoslavia didn't receive all reparation from category A. On February 27th, 1953 *Agreement on German External Debts* was sign in London. It stopped deliveries of reparations until the conclusion of Treaty of Peace. Amount of reparations that Yugoslavia received was less than 1% from the estimated war damage on Yugoslavia properties.⁷

Beside the reparation from Germany, Yugoslavia had a wright to reparations from the other occupying countries: Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. This question was solved at Paris Peace Conference which was held from July 29th to October 15th. It is important to say that the fact that all of three countries changed sides during the war was taken in they favor during the estamblishment of lover amount of reparations for them.

At Paris Peace Conference, Yugoslavia tried to get bigger reparations from Italy. On the other side, western great powers tried to achieve lower reparations for Italy. They considered her as an ally (especially in some future war with communist countries) and they didn't wont for her to weaken more.

Yugoslavian delegation at Paris Peace Conference stressed the suffering of Yugoslavia during the war, victims of war, need for help to those who survived, whose homes were demolished, and who have lost someone from the family. It represented that question of reparations is closely linked with the solidarity between war allies, and morality and honor in international relations. Yugoslav's delegates advocated against decision with political background, but they were aware that situation was not going in their favor. This is why Yugoslavia was willing to reduce its claims, but not as much as western forces wonted to. At the end, Yugoslavia gain the wright on reparations from Italy in amount of 125 million US dollars.⁸

6 AJ – 50 – 69 – 151 – 1945 – p. 68.

7 Pavlica 2005, 62–65; Ђорђевић 1991, 111–112, 114; Živković 1975, 549–555; Сепб 2016, 140–142; Janjetović 2005, 552–553.

8 Кардељ 1947, 6–11, 103–104; Dedijer 1948, 327, 329; Vasiljević 1985b, 45–50, 206–210. | 131

More than for reparations, on the Peace Conference, Yugoslavia fought for the border correction with Italy and a tried to get hold of Trieste and parts of Venezia Giulia. Since she didn't get all she wanted, especially Trieste, she stated that she does not agree with Conference decisions and the decision of the Big Four Conference of foreign ministers in New York (November 4th – December 12th, 1946) on which the final text of Peace treaties were prepared and that she would not sign the Treaty of Peace with Italy. But, after Soviet Union's persuasion, Yugoslavia signed Treaty of Peace with Italy on February 10th 1947. During the signing process, Yugoslav delegate wrote in the signing protocol that by signing the Treaty of Peace with Italy, Yugoslavia does not give up from her claims on her ethnic territories that remained in Italy and in Free Territory of Trieste.⁹

During following years, Italian government was trying to condition beginning of the payment of reparation to Yugoslavia by certain backing down from Yugoslav government in regard to the question of Trieste. Yugoslavia was not willing to participate in that kind of compromise.¹⁰ After couple of years of negotiations, two countries finally agreed in 1950 for the first part of reparations. It was settled as a part of *Agreement for the settlement of all reciprocal economic and financial obligations arising from the Treaty of Peace and subsequent agreements*. Two countries then agreed that reparations would be paid in form of different merchandise. Four years later, on December 18th, two countries made a new arrangement, in frame of *Agreement for the final settlement of all reciprocal economic and financial obligations arising from the Treaty of Peace and subsequent agreements*. According to that Agreement, the question of reparations was closed. At the end, Italy paid only one part of its reparation to Yugoslavia.¹¹

Armistice contract between Hungary on one side, and USSR, USA and UK on the other side, predicted that Hungary should pay reparation to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in amount of 100 million US dollars. That amount was later confirmed at Paris Peace Conference. Due to the fact that Yugoslavia suffered more

9 Кардељ 1947, 6–11, 59, 63, 84, 98–99; Беблер 1949, 79, 84, 97–99, 102–103; Dedijer 1948, 203–207, 214, 230–232; Vasiljević 1985b, 97–98, 240–241, 246; Milkić 2012, 140. AJ – 15 – 15 – 268; DA MFA, PA – str.pov. – 1947 – F 5 – d.1 – Bilten Ministarstva inostranih poslova, br 3, 20. 2.1947, 10; Spasić and Vasiljević 1985, 185–186, 229–231, 358; Dimitrijević and Bogetić 2009, 36; Milkić 2012, 140–141. Ковачевић and Ђурчић 1996, 35; Milkić 2012, 141.

10 Милкић, „Југославија, Италија и Тршћанска криза“, 45, 51, 56–57.

132 11 Bogetić and Tripković 1993, 347–355; Живковић 2016, 125; Ђорђевић 2016, 204–205.

severe damage from Hungarian occupation than Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia asked Czechoslovakia and USSR that the division of Hungarian reparation should not be equal, but more in favor of Yugoslavia. According to that Yugoslav wish, it was agreed that Czechoslovakia would get 30 million and Yugoslavia 70 million dollars.¹²

On May 11th, 1946, Yugoslavia and Hungary signed *Agreement on supplies of goods (materials), which Hungary is obliged to deliver in the name of compensation for damage caused to Yugoslavia during Hungarian military operations and the occupation of Yugoslav territories*. According to it, Hungary would pay reparation in following six years through different merchandise.¹³ Few months later, in August, and during the Paris Peace Conference, Yugoslavia agreed to extend the deadline for paying the reparations for two more years. Although Yugoslavia at that time needed more materials for the rebuilding of destroyed country, she agreed to help to its communist ally. In September 1949, after the Yugoslav conflict with the Cominform broke out, Hungary stopped the delivery of reparation merchandise to Yugoslavia.¹⁴ After Stalin's death and the end of conflict with Cominform, relations between Yugoslavia and Hungary slowly become better. Two countries started economical negotiations regarding Yugoslav claims towards Hungary. Part of it was a question of reparations. Hungary has asked from Yugoslavia to reduce owed amount for reparations. Yugoslavia didn't want to give significant reduction but agreed to lower the amount. Also, she agreed to talk about reparations as a part of other Hungarian debts to Yugoslavia. At one point, in 1955, negotiations were stopped because two countries were not satisfied with the offers of the other country (Hungarians considered that Yugoslav claims were too big, while Yugoslavs

12 AJ – 50 – 69 – 151, 124–126, 133, 163 (10); idem, F 164 – 280; AJ – 54 – 163; AJ – Economic Council of Government of FPR Yugoslavia (Privredni savet Vlade FNRJ, fund 40) – 1 – 3 – Ugovor između Mađarske i Jugoslavije u vezi naknade štete prouzrokovane Jugoslaviji za vreme okupacije od strane Mađarske, 1946; AJ – Federal Executive Council (Savezno izvršno veće, fund 130) – 61 – 1; DA MFA, PA – 1945 – F 23 – d.11 (Mađarska); idem – 1946 – F 51 – d.16 – p. LI/471; DA MFA, PA – 1946 – F 56 – d.10, 3556; idem, d.11; Službeni list 1956; Dedijer 1948, 408; Nikolajević 1956, 301–302; Живковић 2016, 125–126; Ђорђевић 2016, 200–201.

13 AJ – 54 – 163.

14 AJ – 54 – 164 – 279 – Prepiska o reparacijama 1948; DA MFA, PA – 1948 – F 97 – d. 10, p. 258–259; Nikolajević 1956, 302.

thought that offered amount by Hungarians was too small and offensive).¹⁵ Finally, on May 29th, 1956, two countries made an *Agreement on the Regulation of unresolved financial and economic issues*. On the same day *Confidential Protocol* was signed which solved the question of continuation of reparations. During the next month, it was agreed that Hungary should deliver all of reparation merchandise until the middle of 1964. Until that time, Hungary fulfilled all of her obligations regarding the reparations to Yugoslavia.¹⁶

Very close relations between communist parties in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria reflected on question of Bulgarian reparations to Yugoslavia. Soon after the war, two countries were talking about reparations. Because of the elections in both countries, this question was put aside at the end of 1945 and arose again in 1946. During the negotiations, Yugoslavia was the side which retreated and accepted that Bulgaria should pay only the amount that Bulgarian economy gain during the occupation, but not the damage on the Yugoslav property. On June 15th 1946 two countries signed *Agreement about Regulations of claims of Yugoslavia against Bulgaria based on restitution and replacement*, through which all war claims were resolved. Although reparations were not mentioned in this document, Yugoslavia considered that through the delivery of goods mentioned in this Agreement, Bulgaria has paid reparations. Thanks to it, Yugoslavia received different goods that she needed at that time. This decision of Yugoslav authorities was never publicly announced.¹⁷

At the Paris Peace Conference, later that year, Yugoslavia was asking for bigger amount of reparations from Bulgaria, but that was just a political game. Amount of Bulgarian reparations was to be separated between Greece and Yugoslavia. In deal with USSR Yugoslavia demanded bigger amount of reparations for herself, and smaller for Greece. At that time, Yugoslavia already knew that, after

15 DA MFA, PA – 1955 – F 36 – d.31 – 412474 (S-2), 413333, 414522; idem – d.32 – 415365; idem – d.33 – 412092, 412685, 416690; idem – d.34; DA MFA, PA – 1955 – F 37 – d.1 – 412846, 413195; idem – d.2 – 413819; idem, d.3 – 413989, 415226, 417193; DA MFA, PA – 1956 – F 53 – d.2 – 41816; Kovačević, „Jugoslovensko-mađarski odnosi“. Without page number.

16 DA MFA, PA – 1956 – F 52 – d.21 – 423270; idem, F 53 – d.2 – 41816, 45667; Живковић 2016, 126; Ђорђевић 2016, 202–203.

17 AJ – The Cabinet of the Marshal of Yugoslavia (Kabinet maršala Jugoslavije, fund 836) – I-3- b/131; AJ – 50 – 59 – 123 – 1946; idem, F 59 – 123 – 1946 – p. I/1113.AJ – 54 – 152 – 249; Vasiljević 1985a, 171–172; DA MFA, PA – str.pov. – 1945–1946 – F 1 – d.7 –p. I/1093– I/1094, I/1101– I/1102.

the signing of Treaty of Peace, she would publicly write off reparations to Bulgaria, and that Bulgaria would have to pay restitution only to Greece, and that it would help her if that amount would be smaller.¹⁸ Yugoslavia has expected that bigger reparations would be assigned to her, because occupied territory had been bigger in Yugoslavia than in Greece, and rebellion against occupation had been also bigger in Yugoslavia than in Greece. On another side, Yugoslavia didn't want to jeopardize her effort to gain reparations from Italy and Austria. But the plan of these three communist countries didn't work out. Final decision was that Bulgaria should pay reparations in amount of 45 million US dollars to Greece, and 25 million US dollars to Yugoslavia.¹⁹

When the Peace Agreement with Bulgaria was signed, Bulgarian Prime Minister Georgi Dimitrov (Георги Михайлов Димитров, 1882–1949) visited Yugoslavia (26.7. – 2.8.1947). On July 30th he met Yugoslav Prime minister Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980), and among other things, they discussed about reparations. Tito said to Dimitrov that Yugoslav has side already declared that they were ready to give one declaration about writing off the reparations and that they were ready still to do that. He added that they didn't talk in publicity about that because they thought that it could harm their struggle for reparations from Germany and Italy. Than he confirmed that Yugoslavia will write off reparations. Dimitrov agreed that it was time to make that kind of declaration.²⁰ After this meeting several agreements were signed between two countries, and Yugoslavia publicly proclaimed that she writes off reparations to Bulgaria.²¹

Yugoslavia also expected reparations from Austria. She considered that the Declaration from the 1943 Moscow Conference, which stated that Austria should

18 AJ – 54 – 152 – 248 – 1946 – Zapisnik sednice o bugarskim reparacijama održane 7. avgusta 1946. godine.

19 Ковачевић and Ђурчић 1996, 64.

20 Tito's words were: "Treba da pretresemo još jedno pitanje – a to je pitanje reparacija. Mi smo već izjavili da smo pripremni da po tome pitanju damo jednu deklaraciju o odricanju i mi ostajemo pri tome. Mi smo o tome ćutali, jer smo mislili da bi to moglo da nam ometa prilikom raspravljanja o reparacijama od Nemačke i Italije. Sa Bugarskom je, razume se, sasvim druga stvar, sa njom imamo ekonomsku, kulturnu i političku saradnju – i mi se tu odričemo. Kod Italije, Nemačke i Austrije ne možemo. Mađari nam već plaćaju" Answer of Dimitrov was: „Ja mislim da je momenat da se da ovakva deklaracija u vezi sa našim putem ovamo.“ AJ – 386 – I-2-a/17 - Zapisnik sa sastanka delegacija NR Bugarske i FNRJ održanog 30 jula 1947 na Bledu, 8.

21 Popović and Vasiljević 1985, 92; Ђорђевић 2016, 198–199; Dragišić 2007, 126–127; Nešović 1979, 64–65.

bear the responsibility for the participation in war on German side, should be complied. She claimed that Austrian soldiers, as part of German army, and especially those on command positions, are responsible for part of the war damage, committed crimes and lost lives in Yugoslavia.²² Question of reparations from Austria was in close link with the Yugoslav demands for Austrian territories in Carinthia. Yugoslavia didn't get support for her demands from western great powers, while support of USSR was very pale. After the clash of Yugoslavia with USSR and Cominform, she didn't get any kind of support for her demands. Several decisions regarding the future of Austria were brought on Big Four Conference of foreign ministers in Paris (May 23th – June 20th, 1949). Yugoslav claims for Austrian territories and reparations were definitely rejected, but she gain the wright on Austrian properties in Yugoslavia.²³ Yugoslav authorities didn't want to agree with what they had called „Paris dictate“ (*Pariski diktat*) and stated that they would never give up from the claims against Austria. But, in time, very aware of the overall situation Yugoslavia silently stopped asking the reparations and territories from Austria. Also, with the time, relations between Yugoslavia and Austria became very friendly. When Austrian State Agreement was signed, in 1955, it was ratified by Yugoslavia later that year.²⁴ In it, reparations for Yugoslavia were not mentioned, but Yugoslav wright to Austrian properties in Yugoslavia was confirmed. After this, Yugoslavia didn't raise this question any more. She didn't get reparations that she wanted, but she gained small compensation for war damage (trough Austrian properties on Yugoslav territory).

Question of reparation for Yugoslavia was the question of justice for the war damage, but it was also economic and political question. Yugoslavia needed money for rebuilding destroyed country, and for further development. But on the other side, she was aware that she could not get the entire amount she needed, so she agreed to take what she could. All payments were in merchandise that was needed

22 DA MFA, PA – 1947 – F 12 – d.4-d.14; AJ – 54 – 65 – 145; AJ – 54 – 65 – 145 - Jugoslav Memorandum on Reparations from Austria; Vasiljević 1984, 295-301; 344, 347, 354-357, 364-365; Vasiljević 1985, 307-312; Spasić and Vasiljević 1985, 6-95, 267-294, 326-327, 328-336, 355-356, 411-424, 568-569, 571-575, 579-601, 605-607; *Documents on the Carinthian Question*, 54-62; Беблер 1949, 133-134, 136, 154; Dragišić 2013, 48-51, 55-56, 64, 83-90.

23 DA MFA, PA – 1953 – F 8 – d.3 – 46812; Dragišić 2013, 73-74.

24 DA MFA, PA – 1955 – F 4 – d.11; idem – F 5 – d.17; Dragišić 2013, 177–179. DA MFA, PA – 1955 – F 4 – d.2 – 43030, Југословенско-аустријски односи у 1954. години.

at that time in Yugoslavia. Political side was very important. In her fight for Italian and Austrian territories reparations were additional item which Yugoslavia used to press these countries. On the other side, friendly relations caused that Yugoslavia write off reparations to Bulgaria.

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[Agreement for the final settlement of all reciprocal economic and financial obligations arising from the Treaty of Peace and subsequent agreements] Sporazum između Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije i Republike Italije o definitivnom regulisanju svih uzajamnih obaveza ekonomskog i finansijskog karaktera koje proističu iz Ugovora o miru i sukcesivnih sporazuma. *Službeni list Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije, Dodatak broj 2/1956*.

Jugoslavija i reparacije nakon Drugog svetskog rata

SSSR, SAD i Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo su na Potsdamskoj konferenciji (1945. godine) dogovorile načelo podele reparacija za ratnu štetu od Nemačke. SSSR je dobio pravo da naplati reparacije iz istočnih zona Nemačke i Austrije koje su bile pod njenom okupacijom, kao i iz nemačke imovine u Mađarskoj, Rumuniji, Bugarskoj, Finskoj i istočnoj Austriji. Iz svog dela reparacija SSSR je trebalo da odvoji jedan deo za reparacione zahteve Poljske. Ostale zemlje je trebalo da dobiju reparacije iz zapadnih okupacionih zona Nemačke i preostale nemačke imovine u inostranstvu. Radi preraspodele reparacija u Parizu je, krajem 1945. godine, održana Konferencija za reparacije na kojoj je učestvovalo 18 zemalja. Jugoslavija je prijavila materijalnu štetu od 9.145 milijardi dolara, uz gubitak od 1.700.000 stanovnika. Prema odlukama Reparacione konferencije, Jugoslavija je dobila 6,6% reparacija iz kategorije A (nemačka imovina u inostranstvu, zaplenjeni materijal i tekuća proizvodnja), i 9,6% iz kategorije B (industrijski uređaji i brodovi). Nemačka nije isplatila celokupni iznos reparacija, a ono što je Jugoslavija dobila bilo je manje od 1% pričinjene štete. Reparacije od Italije, Mađarske i Bugarske su bile određene Mirovnim ugovorima sa ovim zemljama. Sa svakom od ove tri zemlje Jugoslavija je potpisala posebne sporazume preko kojih je isplaćen deo reparacija. Pri tome, od Bugarske je tajno dobijen samo deo materijala na ime reparacija, a zvanično su joj oproštene reparacije. Ovaj čin je bio političke prirode usled građenja dobrih odnosa dve komunističke zemlje. Sve reparacije su bile isplaćene u vidu industrijskih mašina ili razne robe. Jugoslavija je pokušavala da dobije i reparacije od Austrije, smatrajući da postoji i njena odgovornost zbog učešća Austrijanaca u nemačkim okupacionim snagama, ali za to nije dobila adekvatnu podršku velikih sila.

Ključne reči: reparacije, Jugoslavija, Nemačka, Italija, Mađarska, Bugarska, Austrija, ratna šteta.

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**HOLOCAUST AND
RESTITUTION IN FORMER
YUGOSLAVIA: Legal and
Historical Challenges**

**PART III
RESTITUTION: Ongoing
Moral Issue**

Preliminary Scientific Article

THE ROBBING OF JEWISH PROPERTY AS A SUBJECT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH OUTSIDE THE EX-YUGOSLAV AREA. A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF RESEARCH

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*Christian SCHÖLZEL,
Culture and More*

The article gives an overview of the state of research on the topic of appropriation of Jewish property during the Holocaust in a broad European perspective. Starting with the developments in the Germany historiography, the article emphasizes that nowadays 'Aryanization' is seen less as an act of ruling than as a 'social practice.' This notion rests on vast local studies concerning different cities in the German Reich. When looking at robbing processes outside the Reich, in occupied territories, a learning process can be seen, as it was not possible to apply the practices from the Reich in other countries and societies. The main difference in the occupation practices between Western and Eastern Europe finally, was that in Western Europe the robbing still happened under pseudo-legal forms, while in the Eastern European occupation areas the practices of robbery were much more affected by violence and personal enrichment of the German occupiers.

Key words: Holocaust, Europe, Jews, Property, Historiography, Second World War, Occupation

TO GIVE AN OVERVIEW ON THE FRAGMENTARY research on the robbery of Jewish property in the ex-Yugoslav area would be like bringing sand to the beach in the context of this journal. The authors of this article are currently preparing a comparative research project on the robbery of Jewish property in German-occupied Serbia and in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War. For the development of this and comparable research designs, it is indispensable to focus not only on the “Southeast European specifics”, i.e. the diversities of ethnicities, confessions and ruling systems. Rather, it is important to ask about the state of research on the robbery of Jewish property in the rest of Europe. The term “Aryanization”, that originates in the “völkisch” (folks) anti-Semitism of the 1920s, can only vaguely narrow down the research subject, since it sometimes involves very different meanings. In general, this means the process of economic repression and extermination of the Jews under the Nazi dictatorship, in the narrower sense the transfer of property from “Jewish” to “Aryan”, i.e. “Non-Jewish”, possession/property (Bajohr 2000, 15–30).¹

However, despite the absence of a clear definition, the term continued to prevail in legal and historical-scientific usage even after 1945, to describe thematically the various forms and processes of economic marginalization and extermination of Jews in Europe between 1933 and 1945, often intertwined in a complex manner. In this sense, the literature also reflects a wide range of topics, concerning the research on persecution in the Nazi period, and the problem of the legal and moral “coming to terms” with crimes, especially with regard to the economic restitution of property or the compensation of the victims after 1945. Above all, the public debate on the restitution and the handling of Jewish property without heirs, which had been intensified since 1990, gave new impetus to the subject: It led to a strong differentiation of research approaches and to a deeper insight into the different dimensions of the in parts transnational social and economic upheavals in European societies, which in some parts last until today.² Interpreting “Aryanization” less as an act of ruling than as a “social practice” (Bajohr 2000, 17) with numerous participants, like it

1 For the history of the term see also in detail: Van Laak 2003 (1988); Bajohr 2009, 185–200.

2 A concise overview of the state of research: Nietzel 2009, 561–613; Bajohr 2006, 348–365; Goschler and Ther 2003, 9–25.

is done nowadays, opens up heuristic access to the processes of expropriation and deprivation in the German Reich and in the occupied territories, although they were different in process and intensity. Thus we are able to describe them more accurately and to differentiate them typologically (Goschler and Ther 2003, 18f).

In the literature concerning Germany there is a large number of local studies on the midsize and larger cities in the Reich, in which the various modes of economic robbing and the radicalizing phases of the persecution from the gradual repression from business life through the systematic expropriation to deportation in Germany are analyzed in their regional characteristics.³ Although the circumstances in the respective cases may differ, the common finding was that the state and the NSDAP set the political framework, but that the “Aryanization” took place in a social environment that involved the direct and indirect participation and initiative of millions of Germans and their helpers in various roles and functions. Recent, process-analytically oriented studies emphasize the different persecution dynamics and resistance possibilities that result from the combination of perpetrators, victims and observers or even intervening actors (e.g.: press, business partners, and customers) (Kreutzmüller 2012). In addition, surveys on individual or economic sectors such as the retail trade or the banking sector reveal the range of possible room for maneuver, especially among the “profiteers” in this new economic field of action, ranging from “fair” property transfers to unscrupulous extortion.⁴ In a nutshell, a picture of a gigantic destruction process with high macroeconomic consequential costs emerges, in which the state couldn’t count on profits, contrary to the expectations of the political leadership (Kreutzmüller 2012, 378).

While the “Aryanization process” in Austria⁵ and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Jancík 2011) from 1938/39 on could still be interpreted as a development of the pattern of action practiced in the Old Reich under the conditions of a new legal system completely prescribed by the Nazi regime, the German-Austrian model was not readily applicable to the European occupation areas during

3 Cf. in selection: Bruns-Wüstefeld 1997; Bajohr 1997; Fichtl, Link, May and Schaible 1998; Sparing 2000; Gibas 2007; Henkel and Dietzfelbinger 2012; Fritsche and Paulmann 2014.

4 Cf. Ladwig-Winters 1997; James 2001; Herbst and Weihe 2004; Klaus-Dietmar 2006.

5 See Junz and Huppenkothen 2004; Kremer 2007; Rathkolb et al. 2010; Schafranek and Hurton 2012, 43–66.

World War II: In Western Europe, especially in the Netherlands and in France, a learning process took place, in which German institutions and procedures were partly adapted to local conditions. In addition, new bureaucratic ways of identification and seizure of Jewish property were developed.⁶ Co-operation between local authorities and German occupiers was guided by shared occupation-political interests, while internal rivalries within the collaborating administrations could definitely contribute to increased levels of persecution. Although many “Aryanization” processes were not completed by the end of the war, the efficiently organized registration of Jewish property formed a central component in the entire extermination process (Dean 2010, 31).

The main difference in the occupation practices between Western and Eastern Europe was that the Western European administrations were more attentive to compliance with pseudo-legal forms, while in the Eastern European occupation areas the practices of robbery were much more affected by violence and personal enrichment of the German occupiers. Also, the favoring of collaborators according to racist criteria was a decisive factor (Pohl 2010, 58–72; Dean 2010). Some pronounced anti-Semitic traditions and earlier expropriation measures provided the blueprint for German initiatives, with the collaborating regimes, such as in Slovakia or Romania, pursuing their own goals and carrying out the expropriation measures independently. Hungary granted its Jewish population the greatest freedom until the German invasion, not least because of its heavy dependence on the continuity of “Jewish” activities in the Hungarian economy (Tönsmeier 2003, 73–91; Kamenec 2003, 307–320; Ancel 2011).

In addition to the private and state enrichment with Jewish property, the fiscal policy of the German Reich that aimed to cover the horrendous occupation costs in part from the confiscated Jewish assets played a radicalizing role towards the occupying authorities: because the proceeds of the exploitation of Jewish property were not directly diverted to the occupiers, but were passed on to the budgets of the local governments, this practice increased the dependence of the collaborators from the National Socialist system of rule.⁷ It should be however noted that the consequences of the robbery were reflected very differently in the economic

6 On the policy against Jews in the Netherlands see Aalders 2000, 94–104; Dean 2003, 26–40; on France see Jungius 2008; Bruttmann 2013.

146 | 7 Cf. on Serbia: Aly 2005; Dean 2003.

and social structures of the affected states, but Eastern and Southeastern Europe were affected much more severely than the West and the North of Europe.

The current research is quite disparate for different countries and focuses primarily on the actions of state institutions, while the social field of action is only little illuminated. To make matters worse, especially for Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the destruction of the economic and social order was much more radical and due to the extensive border and population shifts after the end of World War II there was a completely new political starting position - that was perpetuated by the political reorganization in the later socialist states. These preconditions help to explain the differences that have existed for decades in dealing with the question of the restitution of Jewish property and the long public silence in the national discourses of remembrance, which for the most part deal only with certain forms of social suffering and resistance. So far, there has only been a very small number of Europe-wide synopses on robbing and restitution as in the works of Martin Dean and Constantin Goscmler/Philipp Ther.

In particular, the discussion on the restitution of Jewish property in Eastern and Southeastern Europe faces the problem that the attempt to establish justice raises far-reaching questions on how to deal with other social minorities - for example, the treatment of the Roma and the return of property to displaced ethnic Germans (Goscmler and Ther 2003, 19f).

Against the background of the often fragile national unity of the Balkan states that were created in the recent time of nation-building the renegotiation of history and the processing of historical crimes appear more as a threat than as a necessary and social-balancing attempt to establish justice. Under these circumstances, the memory of the loss of property and the specific circumstances of Jewish property transfer to non-Jews remains a sensitive and precarious component of a complex pan-European historical perspective, which political and social implications are yet to be explored in further research.

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Pljačka jevrejske imovine kao predmet istorijskog istraživanja van jugoslovenskog prostora. Kratak pregled prethodnih istraživanja

U članku je dat pregled stanja na temu prisvajanja jevrejske imovine tokom holokausta u širokoj evropskoj perspektivi. Polazeći od razvoja u nemačkoj historiografiji, u članku se naglašava da se danas „arijanizacija” smatra manje aktom vladanja nego „društvenom praksom”. Ova ideja počiva na velikim lokalnim studijama koje se tiču različitih gradova u nemačkom Rajhu. Kada se posmatraju procesi pljačke na okupiranim teritorijama izvan Rajha, može se videti proces učenja, pošto nije bilo moguće primeniti sve prakse iz Rajha u drugim zemljama i društvima. Glavna razlika u okupacionim praksama između Zapadne i Istočne Evrope je bila da se u Zapadnoj Evropi pljačkanje i dalje dešavalo pod pseudo-pravnim oblicima, dok je u istočnoevropskim okupacionim područjima praksa pljačke mnogo više praćena nasiljem i ličnim obogaćivanjem nemačkih okupatora.

Ključne reči: Holokaust, Evropa, Jevreji, Imovina, Historiografija Drugi Svetski Rat, Okupacija

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RESTITUTION OF JEWISH PROPERTY AS AN ONGOING MORAL AND LEGAL ISSUE

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This article aims to survey the post war Jewish property restitution legislation, trying to present the different legal arrangements created over the years. Some 73 years after WWII, the issue of restitution of Jewish property remains un settled. Complication created both by lengthy time difference from the wrong doing and the creation of the legal remedies, and various international agreement, bring us to look into practical legal solution to this problem. One of which could be the newly adopted restitution law in the Republic of Serbia.

Key words: Jewish Property, Restitution, Holocaust, Survivors, Legal Modalities

1. INTRODUCTION

*F*OLLOWING THE MARKING OF 73 YEARS TO THE end of the Second World War and Nazi German inflicted Holocaust, the aim of this article is to explore existing modalities relating to various property return and compensation legal regimes, and try and draw general recommendation of possible solution to ongoing disputes between Jewish Organizations, the State of Israel, the US Government and Central and Eastern European Countries in respect to their Property Legal Regimes.

This article shall begin with a short survey of the German Legal Property Restitution Regime, then after move to other existing Property Restitution Regimes,

then after look into international processes that underwent during the past few years trying to conclude whether a General Trend or a practical conclusion could be drawn by these comparisons.

2. THE GERMAN STORY

Soon after the capitulation of Nazi Germany, the Allied forces occupying Germany commenced to legislate military legislation relevant to compensation of property and remedies for the wrongdoing of the NS Regime (Jelinek 1988, 128). Due to the division of Germany, for historical reasons, the Federal Republic of Germany assumed its responsibility *vis-à-vis* these wrong doings (Buschbom 1981, 52), and started right from its beginning comprehensive attempts to reach both reparations agreements *vis-à-vis* the states – so called “Globale Abkommen” (Van Dam et al . 1953, 14).

Parallel to the discussion on Global reparations, the Federal Republic of Germany started rather from the beginning to negotiate with the help of various diplomats with the State of Israel and representative of the Jewish people (Sagi 1988, 117) on the so-called personal compensation, *Wiedergutmachung*, a new legal system that would under German administrative law (*Verwaltungsrecht*).¹

The idea behind this legal structure was the creation of a state based compensation program funded directly by the Ministry of Finance. Important however to note that these compensation arrangements were not only targeted for Jews, but mainly brought to solve first and foremost also the injustice cases by the NS Regime *vis-à-vis* its own people, meaning also by Germans effected by this NS Regime. It is therefore important to know that this modality aimed to create a comprehensive solution for all open unjust damages caused by the NS Regime.

These negotiations were finalized under the so called Luxembourg Agreement of 1951, paving the way to an agreement among the sides. This agreement is also to be commended as the first ever personal compensation agreement that has three parties to it – Federal Republic of Germany as a successor state of the NS Regime, State of Israel as the newly established Jewish Home, and non-governmental organizations representing World Jewry. All this made way to strike and international accord paving the way for personal compensation programs (Ehrig and Wilden 1960, 201).

The Luxembourg treaty lead to the so called BEG (*Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*), a new German codex presenting a somewhat holistic solution to various compensation issues, such as personal monthly pensions due to health damages due to NS wrong doing (*Gesundheitsschaden*), monetary expropriations such as bank accounts, life policies and other financial rights, and to property expropriations.² Over the years, these basic compensation agreements would be followed by other settlements some of them initiated in Germany some of them would be created elsewhere.

These arrangements would set forth compensation programs allowing Holocaust survivors to receive a lump sum compensation based upon their physical persecution and its duration or for their properties. A formula was created in order to calculate the height of the lump sum, a sum that was supposed to recognize and compensate for deprivation of freedom of the survivor or their basic rights protected under international public law.

In 1965, the German Legislator changed the BEG and introduced the BEG Schlussgesetz, that would allow Holocaust survivors to submit their claims until 1969 (Hebenstreit 1983, 512). Further to the introduction of a special statute of limitation of claims for personal compensation due to health damages, the legislation did take into consideration growing critic echoed by the courts as to the legal basic definition of Art. 43 and 47 BEG.³

The BEG-Schlussgesetz, therefore, was not only limited to the issue of extension of deadline for the purposes of making timely application of the survivors, but would dramatically change the presumption as to the scope of responsibility of the Federal Republic of Germany towards acts of racial persecutions conducted in the territory of the so called “Satellite States”, including compensations for property issues. Having said that it is important to note that the Federal German state did not assume any legal responsibilities for expropriations made by local authorities. This would be the center of a current dispute between the Polish Government and German Government concerning a legal claim that the Polish Government wishes to bring with the German government.⁴ The individual cases brought before

2 Cohen, “Unfaire Prozessführung” (1965) RzW, 530.

3 Zorn, Hermann “Das zweite Aenderungsgesetz zum Bundesentschädigungsgesetz (BEG-Schlussgesetz)” (1965) RzW, 385.

4 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-germany-reparations/polish-lawmaker-due-reparations-from-germany-could-stand-at-850-billion-idUSKCN1GE1NC>

German courts were highly complicated a little success was accomplished (Giessler 1983, 12).

In this respect, the former need to prove a direct responsibility of German forces, or a specific act that unlawfully deprives a survivor from his human rights due to acts that could be related to the responsibility of the NS Reich.⁵ However, as the BEG is an autonomous law, not to be seen as a law creating either rights under civil or criminal law, the burden of proof for establishing NS German Influence would meet a lower evidential requirements.⁶ Therefore, this would be another legal argument to explain why these set of law could not resolve issues relating to restitution in third countries.

With the reunification of Germany, a new window for negotiation opened both as the so-called “East German Compensation Question” remained unsolved (Timm 1997, 86). Two parallel issues arose – first the German Unification and the open restitution questions thereof, and in a much larger scale the issue relating to the establishment of new democracies In Central and Eastern Europe (Mor and Weber 2011, 101). One again, the German model set forth by the Unification agreement, created once more a balanced restitution arrangement – once again not predominantly aimed for Jewish claims, but importantly created a constitutional public law for the Jewish Claims Conference in order to allow them to claim lost Jewish Property (Langner 2010, 119).

The issue of restitution of Jewish Property was resolved in Germany only some 65 years after the war ended. Without undermining the historical legal complicated situation of Germany prior to the reunification, and the need to utilize the unification contract to allow to further the completion of creating a coherent Property restitution regime, some would argue that a giant gap between the 1960’s legislations and the concluding legislations of the late 90s and beginning of 2000 took too long.

The new modalities introduced hand to hand with the Unification agreement mainly in the form of the creation of the German Industry’s fund (EVZ) resolving wrongdoing of the NS, and Issues relating to restitution of lost Art. The First, created a fund compensating for wrongful caesuras of property conducted by NS near industries and robbery conducted by them. The fund created a special claims

5 BGH (Bundesgerichtshof - German Supreme Court), 62 RzW, 269.

154 6 BGH (Bundesgerichtshof - German Supreme Court), 57 RzW, 236-237.

process for insurance, financial rights and goods taken by the industry.⁷ A different model to resolve the Looted art was created in the form of soft law, following the Washington declaration, in the form of a Joint communication of the Federation, Federal State and local authorities incorporating the Washington principles in the German administrative legal system (Schnabel and Tatzkow 2007, 201).

3. THE WEST EUROPEAN MODELS

In order to receive a more coherent view of the ongoing Restitution Efforts, we should look at the legal history of additional European countries, and their experience in dealing with the issues at hand. For this matter, we can take two important countries that dealt from rather earlier stage with their needs to resolve on going restitution legal claims.

The Austrian model dealt first with the annulment of the unlawful expropriation of properties.⁸ This important first step, led to restoring the legal status of confiscated properties to Pre War Status, allowing former legal owners to regain the legal title for these properties. Again, the exit point for the discussion was the creation of a solution for all Austrians being effected by the NS Regimes wrong doing.

The step actually allowed Austria later to promote special legal structure for pending issues relating to Restitution of Jewish Property. At a later stage, negotiations took place between the JCC, under Dr. Nahum Goldman for the compensation for heirless property restitution for the Jewish community.⁹ Such an agreement was later signed in 1961 between the JCC and Austrian government, allowing so-called heirless property to be allocated for the benefit of respected Jewish organization, benefits for survivors and rehabilitation of the Jewish Community.¹⁰ On a practical manner, the Austrian government did act to return registered former Jewish Owners their property if the expropriation were proven.

7 BT-Drs. 14/3459: entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Errichtung einer Stiftung "Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft".

8 Federal Law of Austria from 6th February about the annulment of expropriation of property, StF: BGBl. Nr. 54/1947 (NR: GP V RV 244 AB 306 S. 44. BR: S. 15.)

9 <http://www.jta.org/1961/04/17/archive/dr-gold-mann-to-join-in-a-ustro-german-talks-on-austrian-restitution>

10 Paul Oberhammer August Reinisch, Restitution of Property in Austria, Max Planck institute for international law 2000, p. 752

Following the above-described wave of negotiations with the German Industry lead by Ambassador Eizenstadt (then Under Secretary of State), The United States, Austria, and Jewish Organizations were able to conclude an agreement regarding outstanding legal issues relating to restitution of rights of Austrian Jews. Different from the modality of administrative law, a fund was set in order to allocate Capped monetary compensation under which compensation for lost Properties, including a support for the Jewish community based upon the allocation of heirless properties.¹¹

A Unique approach to resolving outstanding Restitution issues, especially in the field of Heirless property could be seen in the case of Greece, and its special approach to the modalities that are relevant for the well-being of the after war Jewish Community. The government has revoked its right of inheritance of heirless property in case of Jewish ownership, allowing the direct usage of Jewish heirless property for relief aid and support of Jewish activities in Greece. This would mean that Greece was the first Country after the war to transfer the ownership of Heirless Jewish Properties directly to an entity that would be dedicated for Jewish purposes (Tomai-Constantpoulou 2014, 71).

4. THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ISSUE

Following the instatement of the Iron curtain and the splitting of Europe between Western parts and Eastern parts, most of the Central Eastern European Communities fell under the Soviet Regime. Under these Regimes, issues relating to basic Human rights, such as property rights, were of course not discussed both in public but also not between Communities and the Local Communist Regimes as both individual property ownership was non existing under the law, and the exercising of religious affairs, such as the maintaining of the life of Jewish community again was not relevant under these legal systems.¹²

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern European Countries began to address issues relating both for needs of survivors, Jewish communities, and the installment of national laws dealing with the unlawful confiscation of properties under the Communist Regime, allowing both the State of Israel

¹¹ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/129563.pdf>

¹² Supra 13.

and prominent Jewish Organization, under which the WJRO to campaign for the enactment of legislation for restitution of Jewish Property.

However, the task of promotion of a fair and just restitution or compensation system was not successful in the scope awaited. For several years, the US government spearheaded diplomatic efforts and the State of Israel, with WJRO being the umbrella organization representing World Jewry, with no large successes to be reported (Mor 2015, 96).

5. TEREZIN DECLARATION – TACKLING THIS FROM THE SOFT LAW...

On June 2009, 46 counties endorsed the Terezin Declaration, a declaration trying for the first time under existing international law to create soft law basis for the promotion of restitution legal orders. The declaration refers to all fields of restitution, and all relevant issues varying from the welfare of survivors, memory of the Holocaust, restitution of property, art and the preservation of Jewish cultural artifacts and places of religious relevance. The document was co-endorsed by 46 states (later on Serbia joined as a signatory country).¹³

The declaration sets forth, not only the moral basis for the restitution of the property, but tries also to bypass internal European law limitations, such as Art. 345 to the European Treaty excluding property issues from the capacity of the European Commission. The declaration was also accompanied with an agreement between the Czech Republic as at that time the temporary President of the European Union and the European commission (Berman 2010, 58). This long dispute regarding the competences of the Union is still of great interest and was discussed during the first global forum for restitution of Jewish property held on 9th June 2016 at the ministry for Foreign affairs in Jerusalem in coordination with the ministry for Social Equality, special Envoys of various European Union counties, and prominent Jewish organizations such as WJRO.¹⁴

Therefore, one could proclaim that the endorsement of the Terezin declaration is an understating on national level on behalf of the countries that they should follow and promote legislation for restitution of property, including for the

13 <http://www.holocausteraassets.eu/program/conference-proceedings/declarations/>

14 <http://wjro.org.il/our-work/international-declarations-resolutions/international-coordination-forum-restitution-holocaust-shoah-era-assets/>

first time in History, a document agreed upon by so many countries, calling for the restitution of Heirless property as means to reach goals of survivor's welfare, community rebuilding and education.

A year later, the signatory countries met once again in Prague in order to announce the guidelines and best practices for restitution and compensation of immovable (Real) property confiscated or otherwise wrongfully seized by Nazis Fascists and their collaborators during the Holocaust (Shoah) Era between 1933–1945.¹⁵ Once again, these roles acknowledge the need for the allocation of funds that could be based on Heirless property for the good of Holocaust survivors' needs, and their communities.

6. THE SERBIAN LEGISLATION – POST TEREZIN LEGISLATION

On 27th February 2016, the law named Law on elimination consequences of seizure of property of Holocaust victims who have no living legal successors was enacted,¹⁶ bringing in principle a holistic approach to the remaining restitution challenges that the republic of Serbia holds with not only its Jewish community, but represents its moral affirmation stated before for the creation of a platform allowing the state to deal with various issues of restitution.

The law is set forth to regulate the restitution and compensation of properties that belong to members of the Jewish community, which do not have legal heirs. This includes also the restitution and compensation of properties belonging also to associations relating to the Jewish community. The law applies the general provisions set under Art. 2 to the General restitution bill, and by doing so, assure same measures of Justice and maintaining of legal rights as the Republic of Serbia rendered to individual claimants under the general law.

Furthermore, this law envisions not only the technicalities of restituting such properties, but also allocates a yearly sum for the financial support of the Jewish community, needs of Holocaust survivors both in Serbia and abroad, and educational programs. The legislation defines all these lines of activities under Art.

¹⁵ <http://www.fzo.cz/en/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-and-Best-Practices.pdf>

¹⁶ Law on elimination consequences of seizure of property of Holocaust victims who have no living legal successors, Official gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 13/2016.

22 to the legislation, setting at the legislation level the legal norm for the proper allocation of the respected funds.

Understanding the complexity of gathering information, and substantiating a restitution or compensation claim under the general regime of the Serbian law, the legislator extended the deadline for submission of the claims to the scope of three years since the law came into force. Furthermore, the request submitted to the Agency can be completed with the proper documentation even after the deadline has passed. One could conclude that the Serbian model, followed in a way the German model presented after the reunification of Germany, and resembles the good will fund set up by the Jewish Claims Conference.¹⁷

For Serbia, this legislation did not pass without notice. Aside for the well taken political good will signal sent both the US and Israeli government, EU Commission noted this important legislation within the annual progress report, and commended the Serbian Government for their steps.¹⁸ Thus, the Serbian model is of importance as it could be seen as a holistic study case in the field of creating solution to open Restitution questions.

7. EU PARLIAMENT CONFERENCE ON RESTITUTION AND THE GATHERING AT THE ISRAELI PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Sadly, the Serbian Legislation, although comprehensive and in line with the Terezin Declaration and its principles did not spark off a wave of further legislations that would promote a legal solution to the issue of Restitution. Many European Countries, have yet to resolve or to promote designated legislation tackling this issue. In light of this situation, some 9 years after the establishment of the European Shoah Legacy Institute, and the Terezin Declaration, many Jewish Organizations were of the opinion that further steps must be taken in order to resolve the Restitution issue.¹⁹

In light of some disappointing effect, the WJRO, and ESLI (European Shoah Legacy Institute) initiated together with the European Alliance for Holocaust

17 <http://www.claimscon.org/what-we-do/successor/goodwill-fund/>

18 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_serbia.pdf

19 <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/04/24/european-nations-not-returning-jewish-properties-taken-during-holocaust-era.html>

Survivors a conference under the patronage of the European Parliament and Its president to review and discuss outstanding questions relevant for the field of Restitution of Jewish Property.²⁰ The conference was used to present an updated thorough research regarding the legal situation in various Central and Eastern European Countries, and was accompanied by an expert round regarding the issue at hand.

The goal of the conference was to try and create new public and political discussion, recognizing that as early as 1998, the European Parliament concluded a resolution calling to resolve outstanding restitution issues relating to Holocaust Survivors that were deprived of their property rights.²¹ However, this resolution, that followed an earlier one relating to communal property, did not assist in promoting the needed Political pressure on target countries, thus the conference was aimed to promote a discussion.

The conference ended with a declaration later endorsed by 71 members of European Parliament calling both the EU Commission and the members' states to step up their internal discussions in order to promote legal structure that would allow presenting adequate solution for properties issues.²² The EU parliamentarians expressed in their statements their profound belief that the solution to the open restitution of Jewish Property confiscated during the Holocaust or in its aftermath had to come to a rush solution, and that Europe should help close its dark chapter in history regarding the restitution of Jewish property.

Some two weeks later, under the patronage of the Israeli President, E.X. Reuven Rivlin, representatives of the Israeli government, and leading Jewish leaders concluded the second gathering of the sides in order to agree on a joint action plan to be also endorsed by the Israeli President, all this in order to promote both public and diplomatic debate about this important issue.²³ This gathering also included members of former gatherings, and representatives of like-minded government engaged in the field of restitution of property.

20 <http://www.shoahlegacy.org/storage/app/media/2.1/2.1.6.2%20Unfinished%20Justice%20Conference%20Proceedings.pdf>

21 OJ C 292, 21.9.1998, p. 112

22 <https://wjro.org.il/meps-across-europe-pledge-renewed-support-holocaust-survivors-restitution/>

160 | 23 <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4957792,00.html>

8. WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The battle for restitution of Jewish property remains, and should note that the people for whom this moral battle is fought are sadly passing away from us, and time is an enemy. One should take all measures possible within the economical restraints of each relevant country and promote a solution for the outstanding Jewish Restitution issues. In our article we have reviewed different legal tools that would allow us to promote a solution for this issue.

Different modalities have been developed over the years, and thus an individual country could choose the path of creating a compensation fund – in the scope of a global compensation, a mutual fund, allocating monetary support for the reconciliation between people such as the Polish German Reconciliation fund.²⁴ Or the creation of specific compensation mechanism to support survivors, such as in Romania²⁵ and Serbia.²⁶

It is up for the individual countries at hand to assume their moral and historical responsibility and allow the creation of legal structures that would level the fields also for their former Jewish citizens mostly driven away from these countries in a post Holocaust world. The Terezin Declaration was indeed a document endorsed by the signatory countries; it is therefore up to these countries to take actions and present solution 73 years after the Holocaust ended.

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²⁴ http://www.fpnpl.pl/projekty/projekty_en.php

²⁵ Lege 126/2017 pentru modificarea Ordonantei Guvernului nr. 105/1999 privind acordarea unor drepturi persoanelor persecutate de carte regimurile instaurate in Romania cu incepere de la 6 Septembrie 1940 pana la 6 martie 1945 din motive entice, 415, 6.6.2017.

²⁶ Law on elimination consequences of seizure of property of Holocaust victims who have no living legal successors. 2016. Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia, No. 13/2016.

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Restitucija jevrejske imovine kao permanentno moralno i pravno pitanje

Ispitivanje povratka posleratne jevrejske imovine je uvek aktuelno pitanje, a u ovom radu su predstavljeni različiti pravni aranžmani stvoreni tokom godina. Čak 73 godine nakon Drugog svetskog rata ovo pitanje ostaje nerešeno. Komplikacija stvorena dužinom trajanja između pogrešnog delovanja i stvaranjem odgovarajućih pravnih rešenja, kao i raznih međunarodnih sporazuma, dovodi nas do praktičnog pravnog rešenja ovog problema. Jedno od njih bi mogao biti novousvojeni Zakon o restituciji u Republici Srbiji.

Ključne reči: jevrejska imovina, restitucija, Holokaust, preživeli, pravni modaliteti

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THE SERBIAN JEWISH RESTITUTION LAW AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS*

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The case of restitution of the Jewish property in Serbia is very important as the Republic of Serbia was the first state to fully endorse the Terezin declaration and also pass a comprehensive legislation that covered all aspects of the Jewish restitution. The entire process of the passing of the Law were unique as they represented combined effort of the institutions and even more individuals who were not necessarily Jews. The implementation of the Law had few phases and could also be linked with the process of the historical revisionism. Also, this process was happening for the first time in Europe and its success was, and still is, important for all other former socialist states that still haven't passed similar laws. The foundation of the Supervisory Board and its actions were critical in the positive development of the implementation, but still internal fights within the Jewish community in Serbia and their outcome could endanger the process. Paper will also stress the importance of the World Jewish Restitution Organization involvement in the process of restitution and its implementation.

Key words: Restitution, Holocaust, Terezin Declaration, Serbia, Belgrade, Jews, property

*B*EFORE THE WORLD WAR II KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA was among the European countries with rather low number of Jews, only 80,000

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spread across the country in 136 local communities.¹ After the war the number was reduced by 15,000 and after 1953 it dropped to half that figure (Dajč 2017, 122). For the Jews of former Yugoslavia, it is important to notice that during the World War II they were divided between different occupation zones, quisling states and annexed territories. Those differences affected very much not only their own fate, but also the fate of their property. What was common is that after the war their property was treated equally anywhere within the borders of new socialist Yugoslavia. No matter that they survived the Holocaust, Yugoslav Jews were treated in the same manner as other class enemy, and same laws on confiscation, agrarian reform, nationalization of the private property applied to them as well (Dajč, Vasiljević 2014, 148.).

After the end of the Cold War, the fate of the Jewish property in Eastern Europe became the topic for the first time. As a result, the World Jewish Restitution Organization was founded and one of its main goals was to achieve restitution of the Jewish property in the Eastern Europe. After 1997, London Nazi Gold Conference, 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets, which addressed central issues related to restitution and set the stage for the significant advances of the next decade, the January 2000 Stockholm Declaration, the October 2000 Vilnius Conference on Holocaust Era Looted Cultural Assets, were legal preparation that led to June 2009 and the Terezin Declaration. The Terezin Declaration was passed in Czech Republic where representatives of 46 countries endorsed it and signed the joint declaration at the conclusion of the Conference. The result announced a program of activities geared towards ensuring assistance, redress and remembrance for victims of Nazi persecution (<https://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/126162.htm>). Republic of Serbia was, along with the Vatican, among observer states, but was the first one to fully implement the Terezin Declaration in the years to follow.

This paper will focus on the process of the adopting the Jewish Restitution Law in 2016² and its implementation from the early days until the end of 2018. The author of the article was involved in different processes of the adoption as well as implementation, and was either witness or actor in most of the stages that ensued.

1 To learn more about Jews in Yugoslavia and Serbia, see Harriet Pass Freidenreich, "The Jews of Yugoslavia" (1979); Paul Benjamin Gordiewjew, "Voices of Yugoslav Jewry 39-42" (1999); Ženi Lebl, "Do 'konačnog rešenja' Jevreji u Beogradu 1941-1942" (2001); Emil Kerenji, "Jewish citizen of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974". The University of Michigan, 2008 (Doctoral thesis).

2 The full name of the Law is: The Law on Eliminating the Consequences of Property Seizures from Holocaust Victims with no Living Legal Successors.

Process of lobbying for the passing of the Jewish restitution law started with the organization of the international scientific conference *Nationalization, confiscation and restitution – Historical, legal, economic and political issues* held in Belgrade 24-25th February 2014. Conference was open with speeches of main organizers of the conference: prof. Nikola Samardžić on the behalf of NBI Research Center for Humanities and Arts, Strahinja Sekulić on the behalf of the Agency for Restitution followed by Mr. Douglas Davidsons, Special envoy for the Holocaust, and HE Josef Levy, Ambassador of Israel in the Republic of Serbia.

That event evolved into annual conference organized by the NBI Research Center for Humanities and Arts and Agency for restitution, with cooperation and support of the World Jewish Restitution Organization, to be held until the Law is passed (Samardžić 2014, 8).

The participants of the conference also adopted a joint declaration at the end of the conference. The importance of both first declaration and second one from 2015 conference was immense, as they defined guidelines for successful legislation.

During the same year, scientific journal Limes plus published the first ever publication in former Yugoslav space dealing with the complex problem of restitution. The overview of that volume, edited by prof. Nikola Samardžić, was very broad and important, for it covered not only current situation in different European countries regarding their restitution processes, but also historical, economic and legal issues applicable in Serbia, post Yugoslav space and the former Warsaw Pact countries.

In the next year second conference took place, titled *The Holocaust and Restitution*. The conference had a very strong impact and resulting publication was helped by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (English: German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH). At the closing of the conference all participants unanimously accepted the statement that called for the passing of a new Restitution Law that will deal with Holocaust era property. Ambassador Nicholas Dean, Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Department of State of the United States and Ambassador Felix Klein, Special Representative of the Federal Foreign Office for Relations with Jewish Organizations and Holocaust Issues, the Federal Republic of Germany, who attended May conference in Belgrade endorsed the statement on Holocaust Restitution in the Republic of Serbia that was later also published by the European Shoah Legacy Institute (https://wjro.org.il/cms/assets/uploads/2015/12/STATEMENT_-Envoys_Serbia_Holocaust_6may2015.pdf). The statement declared that restoration of the Jewish

community in Serbia is a testament to the resilience of the community and the support of the Republic of Serbia. The return of confiscated property is essential for the future of the Serbian Jewish community and the ability of Holocaust survivors from Serbia to live their remaining days in dignity (https://wjro.org.il/cms/assets/uploads/2015/12/STATEMENT_-Envoys_Serbia_Holocasut_6may2015.pdf).

The next important step that followed was undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, who created the Working group that was supposed to draft the new Law. After the conflict of jurisdiction between two ministries: The Ministry of finance and the Ministry of justice – regarding the question which ministry will form the working group, the Government of the Republic of Serbia finally authorized the Ministry of justice to prepare the Law.

The previous organizers of the conference took active and prominent role in that process: Mr. Branko Lakić from the Agency for Restitution along with Strahinja Sekulić and Mr. Nachliel Dison and Milan Samardžić on the behalf of the World Jewish Restitution Organization. Dr. Stefan Samardžić from the Faculty of Law, University of Novi Sad was also member of the team that was instrumental in drafting of the Law. The Federation of the Jewish Communities of Serbia formed their own working group that was able to join the working group formed by the Ministry of Justice. Within the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Serbia (the Federation) there was internal fight about the prospective Law and representation of the Federation in the process of drafting the Law. That conflict later continued, but between the Federation and the World Jewish Restitution Organization about the distribution of and the control over funds received per that Law. The role of the Agency for Restitution was important as it was mediating in the conflict that could endanger the Law (Dajč 2017, 127). The different views between the Federation and the WJRO proved to be significant once the Law was actually implemented. By the late fall of 2015 the Working group team that was drafting the law finished their job and the Law was ready.

The Law was passed on February 19th, 2016 without a single negative comment in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Public resistance was not present in any form (Lakić, Dajč 2018, 614). This law adopted all of the principles of the Terezin Declaration, that made the Republic of Serbia to be the first ever Central or Eastern European country to fully endorse the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues. Importance of that grew even more in following years, as no other post-socialist state passed similar Law covering both communal and private property. This law insists on the restitution in kind wherever

possible, and the Republic of Serbia has determined financial support in the amount of 950,000 EUR annually for the next twenty-five years (Lakić, Dajč 2018, 614).

The passing of the Law in the Republic of Serbia showed that support of the State Department and Special Envoy for the Holocaust issues had been very significant for the restitution process, as well as the support of the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Belgrade, churches and religious communities, and the non-governmental sector (Lakić, Dajč 2018, 616). It is also important to note that the initiative for this law, the work on the text, lobbying, media campaigns were initiated and enacted by the institutions of the Republic of Serbia, primarily the Agency for Restitution, and eminent individuals, mostly non-Jewish, gathered in the NGO NBI Research Center for Humanities and Arts, and Association of Public Prosecutors and Deputy Public Prosecutors of Serbia (Dajč 2017, 127). But for the successful outcome crucial was partnership with the World Jewish Restitution Organization, since the first conference organized in Belgrade in February 2014 proved to be the winning combination.

The passing of the Law in Serbia was important as the excuses saying that restitution is impossible because of long time that passed and a lack of documentation, as well as the objective lack of money for complete restitution, were not and cannot be the reason for not implementing the restitution process (Lakić, Dajč 2018, 616). For countries much richer than Serbia, that are already part of the EU and that were also socialist countries, the full implementation of Terezin declaration can be fulfilled if they follow the example of the Republic of Serbia. Until late 2018 none of the former Yugoslav states hasn't passed similar Law.

The next stage was the implementation of the Law. There are few sides involved in the process, state institutions and Jewish communities. Among state institutions the most important role had the Agency for Restitution, as the Agency was passing the decisions by which the property was transferred to the Jewish communities. Other important state agent was the prosecutor's office at municipality or city level, as they could appeal against Agency decisions. On the other side the Jewish communities were entitled to make claims for the property that once belonged to Jewish individuals.

The process of implementation was interlaced with the revisionism of history. One of the results of revisionism in former socialist country was rehabilitation of the collaborators (Bešlin 2013, 83-84). Serbia had the same challenges as other states and as a result the first Government of Vojislav Koštunica opened the process of historical revisionism in which numbers of collaborators from the

World War II were rehabilitated, but the prospective rehabilitation of Milan Nedić, the quisling prime minister in Belgrade during the occupation, was the worst possible outcome (<https://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=864529>). Strahinja Sekulić, director of the Agency for Restitution, was among the first ones to see the connection between those two processes. He didn't allow the restitution claim of Milan Nedić's heirs to be accepted since Milan Nedić was a Nazi collaborator (<https://www.021.rs/story/Info/Srbija/203734/Sekulic-Potomcima-nacista-ne-vracamo-imovinu-oglusicemo-se-o-odluku-suda.html>). In case rehabilitation of Milan Nedić was accepted, the entire process of Jewish restitution could be jeopardized as other heirs of collaborators could hope for rehabilitation of their ancestors that would allow them to claim the property that was in many cases taken from Jews killed during the WW2 or bought under duress. The first statement on behalf of the Jewish Community of Belgrade (the JCB) was given by Haris Dajč in October, who was at the time one of 2000 members of the community (<https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/1.748999>). That led to the involvement of the JCB in the process at the Higher Court in Belgrade that was started by Milan Nedić's heirs. Eventually, after the Court accepted witnesses that the JCB suggested, the Higher Court in Belgrade issued a decision on July 11, 2018, rejecting the request for the rehabilitation (<https://www.bg.vi.sud.rs/vesti/1439/odbijen-zahtev-za-rehabilitaciju-milana-Nedi%C4%87a.php>). This involvement of the JCB was not only successful judging by rehabilitation request outcome, but also made Jewish community very popular among many citizens of Serbia that were opposed to the revisions of history and rehabilitation of war criminals and collaborators from the World War 2 (<http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a381861/Ivan-Ivanji-o-Jasenovcu-Satrom-sajmis-tu-i-Topovskim-supama.html>).

Methodology that Jewish communities had to apply for claiming the property was unknown to them and the lack of expertise also was a challenge. Aware of that, the Federation of the Jewish Communities asked the Jewish Distribution Committee (JDC) for financial help and they received the loan of 50,000 USD. The Federation used that money to help Jewish communities in research process. Jewish Community Belgrade (JCB) was and still is the biggest Jewish community in Serbia with highest amount of property that could be claimed. The research team that was formed by Dr. Haris Dajč and that included Dr. Vesna Aleksić and prof. Nikola Šuica, made a detailed project that included necessary methodology for successful research of properties in Belgrade territory wherein kind restitution was possible. The project had two parts: First one was focusing on the immovable

property and second onewas focusing on the movable property, mostly looted art. The first one was based on the previous research of Dr. Aleksić (Aleksić, Vesna. “Sudbina jevrejskog kapitala tokom nemačke okupacije u Srbiji”. *Limes Plus* 2 (2014): 109–122.) and the archive research in the Archives of Yugoslavia, to be conducted by Dr. Dajč, and that led to research in the Belgrade Historical Archives (Dajč, Haris and Vasiljević, Maja. “Kretanje nepokretne imovine beogradskih Jevreja kao posledica Holokausta”. *Limes Plus* 2 (2014): 139–154.). One of the main sources was the Franz Neuhausen³ database that the Federation possessed as well as the lists of prewar Belgrade Jews (telephone list, tax list etc.).

The JCB made an agreement with the NBI Research Center for Humanities and Arts in fall of 2018 that enabled the JCB to get the most important data: location of properties and names of previous owners. The Jewish Historical Museum was the institution that could help to identify and verify that the previous owner was the member of the Jewish community. That was not always an easy job, since a lot of Belgrade prewar Jews didn't always identify as Jews, so only after the prewar lists were combined with the list made by Nazis in the spring of 1941, the picture of full number of Belgrade Jews and their property became clearer (Veselinović 1998, 185–195). The NBI did their part of the work in less than 2 months so the JCB was able to take full advantage of that, as they got the most important data. The later part of the research was based on checking the cadaster books and reas-suring property is still owned by the State.

In December 2016 the final conference *Serbian Heirless and Unclaimed Property Law: Historical Background and Actual Implementation*, organized by the same institutions that started the entire process, was held at the premises of the Agency of Restitution. The conference participants endorsed the declaration in which they saluted the Republic of Serbia for passing of the Law. The declaration also addressed all signatory states of the Terezin declaration to follow the example of the Republic of Serbia and pass similar legislation to ensure a just and fair restitution process. Declaration recognized the important role of the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the Jewish community and the help of special envoys from the USA, Germany and Israel, as well as the ambassadors of the European Union and a number of countries, in the discussions leading to the passage of this legislation (<http://en.balkansinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/III-Belgrade-Restitution-Conference-Declaration.pdf>).

³ Franz Neuhausen was the special plenipotentiary for economic affairs in the Territory of the Military Commander in Serbia during most of the German military occupation.

At the conference in the European Parliament Unfinished Justice: Restitution and Remembrance in April 2017 that was opened by the President of the European Parliament Antonio Tayani and followed by the declaration that was signed by the MEPs from majority of member states, Serbia was pointed as the model for other countries that still haven't passed legislature (<https://wjro.org.il/cms/assets/uploads/2017/07/european-parliament-declaration-unfinished-justice-restitution-and-remembrance-with-signatures-6-26-2017.pdf>).

The only obstacle that the JCB still faced was the fact that in some cases the prosecutors at the level of Central Belgrade municipalities wherewas located most of the Jewish property in Belgrade, were making appeals against the Agency of Restitution decisions. Their procedure can be justifiedwith their wish to ensure that transfer of the property from the State to Jewish communities was done according to Law. Still, as that was slowing the process, representative of the JCB, vice-president Haris Dajč had successful meetings with the city and municipality prosecutors that helped them understand that the Jewish Restitution Law was Lex specialis, and that prevented further appeals.

By the January 2017 everything looked like the process of the implementation will go very smoothly, but that wasn't the case.

The JCB repeated the mistakes about unauthorized representation, for certain JCB employees who are not qualified lawyers were acting as pseudo-lawyers. In that way the JCB was risking their claims for restituted propertyto be illegitimate. As the result of the different understanding of the responsibility regarding the implementation of the Law, the fights in Jewish communities erupted and resulted in new elections that brought about new leadership in May 2017. One of the main disputes was about the principle of transparency that was required by the Law. The issue of transparency proved to be the most problematic one during the entire process and remained so. The JCB was supposed to make an available online list of all restituted property for few reasons: to make sure possible heirs could claim back their property from the Jewish community as it is their right by the Law (Article 21), to provide a transparent information about the property: to whom it is rented, for how much and until when. The biggest Jewish community in Serbia failed to do so. The situation among the Jewish communities was getting more tense until the full escalation between the JCB and the Federation. The cause of the conflict were funds that the Federation and JCs were receiving from the State as a part of the financial help introduced by the Lawwhen the Republic of

Serbia started the 25 years plan by transferring to the Federation in 2017 amount of 950,000EUR, according to the Law (Article 9).

In the early 2018 the toxic relations between the Federation and the JCB continued, and the funds that were received from the State were main cause of the fight. What was an unpleasant situation now turned into serious fight that was slandered in the newspaper and media (<http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:715742-Jevrejska-opstina-Godina-trosenja-ali-bez-kocnica>). That tendency kept on getting momentum, especially towards the end of the year.

In the March 2018 The Government of Serbia appointed its representative in the Supervisory Board, since it was not functioning properly until that moment (<http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:694661-Nema-nadzora-nad-parama-zrtava-Holokausta>). The Government appointed Haris-Dajč as he was involved in the process of the drafting and enacting of the Law, its implementation and is also an expert in legal and material position of Jewish property in post-Holocaust Yugoslavia (<http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/403984/Drustvo/Imovina-stradalih-Jevreja-od-sada-pod-kontrolom>). The Supervisory Board is the only controlling body that was established by the Article 23 of the Law. The Board consists of 5 members – the representative of the State who is at the same time a Chairman of the Board, 2 representatives appointed by the WJRO and 2 representatives appointed by the Federation. In less than two months after its first meeting, the Board managed to pass the Rules of Procedure that were obviously necessary and are envisioned by the Law (Article 23), appointed an independent external auditor, resolved a conflict between the Jewish Community Zemun and the Federation, obtained an office and appointed the secretary.

As the deadline for the first report was approaching and auditing of the year 2017 was taking place, the first challenges appeared in front of the Board: the main issue was similar to the already mentioned one – the transparency (<http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:733917-RAZDOR-ZBOG-RESTITUCIJE-Rasplamsao-se-sukob-u-jevrejskoj-zajednici>). Sometime in June, the Supervisory Board and its Chairman were attacked in few articles that included people from the Jewish Community unhappy with the functioning of the Supervisory Board (NIN weekly magazine, June 14th and June 28th 2018). Defamation and accusation stopped once the external auditor's report was ready and once the problems with spending the fund given by the State in inadequate manner became obvious (Conclusions of the Supervisory Board, 26th July 2018). That document

was also signed by one of two representatives that were part of the Board on behalf of the Federation.

After a joint effort of the chairman of the Board and the representatives of the WJRO in autumn of 2018, the situation improved a lot. The other important factor was the need of the Federation to ensure that they, as the institution responsible for managing funds received by the Law, have functioning procedures set in place. The Federation accepted the decision of the Supervisory Board and made contract with consulting company that helped them in achieving the necessary standards and fulfilling requests of the Supervisory Board. The Federation also made a new web site that made the entire process far more transparent. In the second part of the 2018 the Federation and most of the Jewish communities made huge progress in adequate implementation of the Law and spending of the funds. Still, the main reason for conflict within the Jewish community of Serbia remained the same, and the bitter conflict between the Federation and the JCB continued until the end of the year. The very sad outcome of that were public statements of the conflicting sides that became almost daily news in late 2018. That tendency marked the begging of the 2019, too.

The biggest challenge the Supervisory Board faced in the implementation of the Law wasn't internal fight between different fractions of the Jewish communities in Serbia, but the danger of the suspension of the Law. At the beginning of the 2019 the Supervisory Board found out about the initiative that was handed over to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia that suggested that one part of the Law (Article 21) should be suspended, as it was violating human rights as well as the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. The Article 21 of the Law enables the prospective heirs for the unclaimed property to claim it back from the Jewish communities and is fully in accordance with the Terezin Declaration. The Supervisory Board made a prompt reply to the Constitutional Court. The Federation also reacted and stated that initiative is against the interest of Jewish communities of Serbia and against the spirit of the Law. The initiative was made by the Law company in May 2018, the same Law company that was representing the JCB during 2018 in different legal cases.

The process of the restitution in Serbia is of great importance as it can be a Litmus test that can prove if the other European societies are ready for the successful process of the restitution. In Serbia, state institutions were securing the process that was in most cases threatened by the beneficiary side. What proved to be one of the most important mechanism in damage control was the establishment of the

independent supervisory mechanism that consisted of different sides. The role of the international Jewish organization, in the case of this Law, the World Jewish Restitution Organization, was crucial and helped the continuation of the successful implementation of the Law despite all the challenges.

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Zakon o restituciji jevrejske imovine i njegova implementacija: izazovi i pouke

Zakon o restituciji jevrejske imovine bez naslednika koji je donela Republika Srbija 2016. nije predstavljao samo istorijski korak za Srbiju koja je sveobuhvatno rešila problem jevrejske imovine oduzete kao posledice Holokausta, već je postala i primer svim drugim zemljama nekadašnjeg istočnog bloka koje, i pored toga što su nominalno prihvatile Terezinsku deklaraciju iz 2009, i dalje nisu odmakle u tom procesu. Rad se odnosi na proces donošenja zakona, ali i na proces koji je zatim usledio: implementaciju zakona. U toku sprovođenja zakona različiti izazovi su pretili da ugroze postupak: od rehabilitacije ratnih zločinaca iz Drugog svetskog rata, do problema sa kojima su se suočavale jevrejske zajednice koje su i recipijenti sredstava koja se kao rezultat primene zakona njima uplaćuju. Najvažnije telo koje je osnovano po Zakonu i čija je prva briga praćenje namenskog trošenja sredstava jeste Odbor za nadzor koji je počeo da radi u punom kapacitetu tek nakon marta 2018. Izazovi sa kojima su se članovi odbora suočavali su značajni jer se na osnovu njih može pratiti koji su to problemi u vezi sa primenom zakona sa kojima su se oni susretali, kao i na koji način su ih rešavali. Iskustvo Srbije je od značaja za celu Evropu i sve ostale države koje su na putu donošenja zakona vezanih za restituciju jevrejske imovine oduzete kao posledice Holokausta.

Ključne reči: restitucija, Holokaust, Terezinska deklaracija, Srbija, Beograd, Jevreji, imovina.

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LJILJANA DOBROVŠAK, ŽIDOVI U SRIJEMU, OD DOSELJENJA DO HOLOKAUSTA

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*Državni arhiv u Vukovaru,
Posebna izdanja III., Vukovar, 2017., 376 str.*

SREDINOM 2017. GODINE, DRŽAVNI ARHIV U Vukovaru objavio je knjigu o Židovima u Srijemu povjesničarke dr.sc. Ljiljane Dobrovšak. Autorica knjige Ljiljana Dobrovšak, viša je znanstvena suradnica sa Instituta društvenih znanosti „Ivo Pilar” iz Zagreba koja od završetka studija povijesti istražuje povijest Židova u Hrvatskoj od kraja 18. stoljeća pa sve do današnjih dana. Nakon što je 2013. objavila knjigu o Židovima u Osijeku, nastavila je istraživati povijest slavonskih i srijemskih židovskih zajednica, pa je kao rezultat njezinih dugogodišnjih istraživanja objavljena ova sveobuhvatna monografija. Knjiga „Židovi u Srijemu, Od doseljenja do Holokausta” na 376 stranica obrađuje povijest srijemskih židovskih zajednica na području danas srpskog i hrvatskog dijela Srijema (nekadašnje Srijemske županije). Iako autorica piše o židovskim zajednicama u cijelom Srijemu (Zemun, Petrovaradin, Šid, Ruma, Erdevik i Srijemska Mitrovica), te daje pregled njihove povijesti, osobiti naglasak stavila je na povijest Židova u Vukovaru i Iloku. Autorica se pri pisanju ove monografije koristila arhivskim izvorima kao i objavljenim i neobjavljenim znanstvenim i drugim dijelima, koje je znanstveno-analičkom metodom analizirala, o čemu svjedoči bogata bibliografija na kraju knjige.

Prema razdobljima koje autorica obrađuje, knjiga se može podijeliti na četiri velika poglavlja: „Od doseljenja do 1914.” (str. 15–178), „Prvi svjetski rat 1914.–1918.”, (str. 179–198), „U okvirima nove države” (str. 199–260) i „Holokaust” (str. 261–316). Nakon kratkog uvoda u kojem autorica daje kratak pregled dosadašnje historiografije i radova koji su objavljeni o povijesti židovskih zajednica u Srijemu, slijedi prvo veće poglavlje „Od doseljenja do 1914. godine”. Autorica je ovo poglavlje

podijelila na nekoliko manjih poglavlja u kojima prati doseljavanje Židova u Srijem, osnivanje općina, vjerski, društveni i kulturni život židovskih zajednica od prve polovice 19. stoljeća pa sve do početaka 20. stoljeća. U zasebnim poglavljima obrađuje demografske prilike i analizira broj srijemskih Židova prema ondašnjim službenim popisima. Iz knjige je uočljivo da se Židovi počinju doseljavati u Srijem tek krajem 18. (od 1783) i početkom 19. stoljeća, iako su kao trgovci zabilježeni u dokumentima stoljeće ranije, međutim bilo im je zabranjeno naseljavanje. Od zabrane naseljavanja izuzeti su bili Židovi u Zemunu koji su se naselili već u prvoj polovici 18. stoljeća jer su dozvolu naseljavanja dobili direktno od habsburških vladara. Tijekom 19. stoljeća povećanjem broja, Židovi u Srijemu osnivaju općine u svim većim mjestima kao što su Vukovar, Vinkovci, Erdevik, Ilok, Sremska Mitrovica i Ruma, izuzev Zemuna gdje je općina osnovana sredinom 18. stoljeća. Uz gradove i trgovišta koje su naseljavali zabilježeni su i u većini okolnih srijemskih sela. Budući da je autorica naglasak stavila na vukovarsku židovsku općinu, opisuje njezin općinski i vjerski život kroz navedeno razdoblje, piše o izgradnji vukovarske sinagoge i djelovanju vukovarskih rabina među kojima se ističu David Löwy i Julije Diamant. U zasebnom poglavlju piše o istaknutim pojedincima koji su djelovali u društvenom, kulturnom, gospodarskom i političkom životu Vukovara te zajedno sa ostalim sugrađanima kreirali povijest grada na Dunavu. Autorica je zasebno obradila i pojavu antisemitizma u Srijemu u 19. stoljeću koji je bio povezan uz narodni, protumađarski pokret koji se zbio u ljeto 1883. i 1903. godine, kao i pojavu cionističkog pokreta. Pred kraj ovog prvog poglavlja u kratkim crtama daje povijesni pregled ostalih židovskih općina u Srijemu: Ilok, Zemun, Petrovaradin, Šid, Ruma, Erdevik i Srijemska Mitrovica.

U drugom poglavlju, „Prvi svjetski rat (1914–1918)”, autorica opisuje prilike u Srijemu za vrijeme Prvoga svjetskoga rata i odnos židovskih zajednica prema izbijanju rata. Budući da je Srijem teritorijalno bio pogranično područje između Austro-Ugarske i Kraljevine Srbije, u jednom trenutku našao se i u središtu sukoba, što se reflektiralo i na srijemske židovske zajednice, osobito krajem rata, kada dolazi do pojave zelenog kadra i pljački u kojima su nerijetko znali stradati židovski trgovci. Nakon povijesnog pregleda srijemskih židovskih zajednica i djelovanja u vrijeme Prvoga svjetskog rata, slijedi treće poglavlje „U okvirima nove države“ u kojem autorica obrađuje srijemske Židove u periodu Kraljevine SHS odnosno Jugoslavije (1918–1941). Kao i u prethodnim poglavljima, autorica kroz

178 povijest vukovarske židovske općine daje pregled povijesti srijemskih Židova u

međuratnom razdoblju. Nakon kratkog uvoda o položaju Židova u novostvorenoj državi, autorica analizira demografske odlike Židova u Vukovaru i Srijemu, opisuje svakidašnje prilike židovske općine u Vukovaru, kao i njezin vjerski i društveni život. U ovom dijelu autorica poseban naglasak stavlja na rad vukovarskih židovskih društava, posebice cionističkih, koje je na temelju fragmentirane građe pokušala i rekonstruirati. Kao i u prethodnim poglavljima, pred kraj ovog poglavlja autorica daje kratak povijesni pregled i djelovanje ostalih srijemskih židovskih zajednica.

Zadnje poglavlje knjige „Holokaust” bavi se razdobljem od 1941. i 1945. godine, kada se Srijem našao u sklopu Nezavisne Države Hrvatske. Ovo poglavlje posvećeno je Holokaustu uslijed kojeg je došlo do potpunog uništenja židovskih zajednica na području cijelog Srijema. Autorica je na temelju raznih izvora poime-nično pokušala iskonstruirati imena i prezimena Židova koji su živjeli u Vukovaru i Iloku, a koji su stradali u ustaškim (Jasenovac) i njemačkim (Auschwitz) logorima. Ovo poglavlje autorica završava kratkim osvrtom o „ostacima” židovskih zajednica nakon Drugog svjetskog rata. Kraj rata dočekala je tek nekolicina srijemskih Židova. Oni koji su preživjeli iseli su se u Izrael ili u druge dijelove tadašnje Jugoslavije. Izuzev zemunske židovske općine nijedna druga židovska općina nije preživjela strahote Holokausta niti nastavila djelovati.

U okviru svakog poglavlja, autorica je obradila sve rabinatate (Vukovarski, Iločki, Sremskomitrovački, Rumski i Zemunski) na području Sremskog nadrabi-nata odnosno sve židovske općine na ovom području. U monografiji su posebno dragocjeni podaci o doseljavanju pojedinih obitelji, gdje autorica navodi imena i godine rođenja prvih židovskih stanovnika u Srijemu i to za razdoblje prije službe-nog vođenja matičnih knjiga (od 1852. godine). Izuzetno jake i značajne židovske zajednice u Vukovaru i Iloku do sada nisu bile posebno i u većoj mjeri obrađivane, pa je sinteza podataka iznijeta u ovoj monografiji o ovim židovskim zajednicama od nemjerljivog značaja i kao takva od sada nezaobilazan put u daljnjim istra-živanjima. Autorica kroz cijeli period koji obrađuje u knjizi razjašnjava procese integracije Židova, prvo u austrougarsko državno okruženje, a potom i jugoslaven-sko. U tom kontekstu opisuje i međunacionalne odnose između Židova i drugih naroda na ovom prostoru, prvenstveno Hrvata, Srba, Nijemaca i Mađara. Knjiga obiluje statističkim podacima za cijeli ovaj prostor i kroz sve periode, što je izu-zetno dragocjeno kao pokazatelj brojčanog kretanja Židova u Srijemu, pogotovo u odnosu na druge teritorije iste države. Iako je najveći naglasak u knjizi stavljen na židovsku zajednicu u Vukovaru, autorica, kao što je već rečeno, posvećuje pažnju i

svim ostalim mjestima u Srijemu. Svi podaci izneseni u monografiji dragocjeni su za eventualna buduća istraživanja povijesti Srijema, jer knjiga je izvrstan pregled ukupne povijesti Srijema, osobito od početka 18. stoljeća pa sve do kraja Drugog svjetskog rata. Jednostavnije riječima, povijest Židova u Srijemu, povijest je samog Srijema, a povijest Židova u Vukovaru ujedno je i povijest samog Vukovara.

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